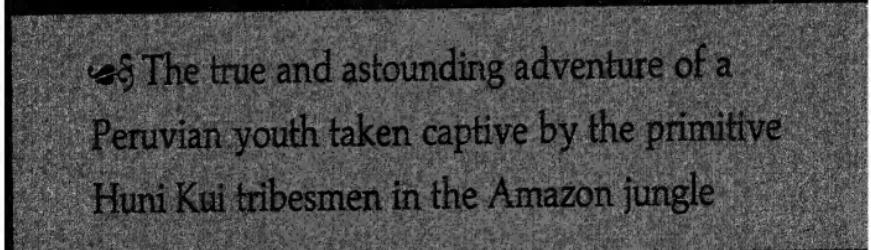


Wizard of the Upper Amazon

Manuel Córdova-Ríos and F. Bruce Lamb



• The true and astounding adventure of a
Peruvian youth taken captive by the primitive
Huni Kui tribesmen in the Amazon jungle



Wizard of the Upper Amazon

This is the true and astounding story of a Peruvian youth from Iquitos who, on a rubber-cutting expedition into the Amazon forest, was taken captive by Amahuaca Indians and carried off to their remote jungle village at the headwaters of the Madre de Dios River. The Huni Kui were savage, cannibalistic tribesmen, and Manuel a frightened and inexperienced young man from a radically different culture; but as he watched his captors and began to pick up their ways, it became obvious that their plan was to make a lot of a gastronomical meal of him. He was their leader! After prolonged observation and testing, they inducted him into their secret society and chose him to replace their aging chief. As part of his training, he was schooled in the use of the "vision vine," the elaborate ritual surrounding the drinking of this hallucinatory extract, and the lessons to be learned from its effects. The vibrant and haunting descriptions of Manuel's "trips" on the wings of this vision vine, with the wizened old headman as his mentor, provide some of the most arresting

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Wizard of the upper Amazon

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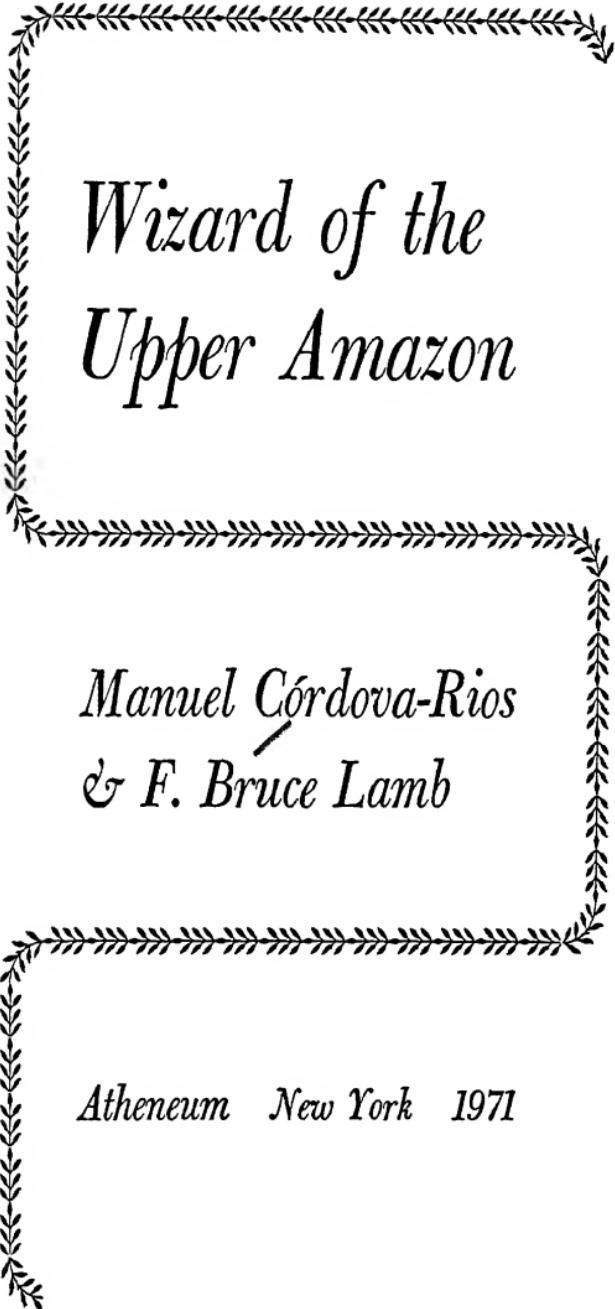
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Upper Amazon*



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*Manuel Córdova-Ríos
& F. Bruce Lamb*

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Foreword

THE VISION-PRODUCING extract of *ayahuasca*, a jungle vine, became a subject of discussion soon after my arrival in Peru. I came to survey the forest resources in the drainage area of a group of upper Amazon River tributaries. Support personnel and equipment for my field work in this primitive area came from a local mahogany sawmill with an operations base at Iquitos. This company had a river fleet of log-towing motor launches and men familiar with the streams and forests of the region.

At Iquitos I met the man who was going with me as a guide. I learned that Manuel Córdova had spent most of his life in the forest and because of his knowledge was retained by the company to obtain medicinal and other extracts from forest plants for test-

ing and commercial use. Among these was the deadly curare, jungle-vine extract used by the Indians for their blowgun darts and in modern medicine as a muscle relaxant in delicate surgical operations. Córdova knew the Indian secret of making an extract concentrate that could be shipped or stored without spoilage.

Before leaving Iquitos I found out that Córdova was a healer of considerable fame—the man people went to for help when the medical profession found a case incurable. On our trip this became evident. Whenever we made a stop at some riverside village, there would soon be someone on board the launch looking for Don Manuel. He would be greeted warmly and reminded of a miraculous cure he had performed on either the visitor or a member of his family.

The forest area drained by the Rio Tigre was first on our resource survey program. After an aerial reconnaissance in a small chartered airplane, ground observations were undertaken from the river, using a motor launch as a floating operations base. When we left the river to go into the forest on foot we usually took a man from the closest village as a local guide. One day we were going along a faint forest trail without the usual machete trail-cutting. I noticed that every fifty feet or so Córdova was breaking over the tip of an undergrowth forest plant about waist high.

That evening when we were back on the launch I mentioned that the only other time I had seen this

trail-marking method used was when working with the Apiaca Indians on the headwaters of the Rio Tapajos in Matto Grosso, Brazil. Córdova replied that he had learned this easy way of marking a jungle trail from the Amahuaca Indians. This led to an exchange of Indian stories in which I soon found myself doing most of the listening.

Several days had already been spent examining the forest at other locations by the time we arrived at a place on the riverbank called Santa Helena, graced by a small palm-thatched *tambito*. By this time we had established an operating routine and I was familiar with the crew.

It was early in the morning when we eased the launch up to the riverbank and made fast to a tree. We found the palm-thatched house at Santa Helena empty and the fireplace cold. But the anchorage was convenient to the mouth of a small creek nearby, and we left the cook to make peace with the owner if he should return in our absence. The creek provided access to a forest area we wanted to examine, and soon we were on our way in a canoe outfitted with an outboard motor. The trees arched and closed over the narrow channel, and we found ourselves navigating up a wandering tunnel in the jungle vegetation.

Arriving back about midday at the *tambito* where our launch was tied up, we found that the owner had returned with his family and a friend. The two men were conversing in a language I could not understand. After greeting us in Spanish they went back

to their private idiom. I noticed Córdova listening intently, and soon, to the surprise of the men, he entered the conversation, which continued with animation for many minutes. When it broke up, the two local men stepped into a canoe and disappeared into the thick curtain of vegetation that hangs over the banks of all tropical streams.

Córdova came over and explained that the visitor was from several days' canoe travel up a branch of the Rio Tigre, the Pucacuro. He had been through a siege of bad backaches and had come to consult with his friend about a cure. Now they had gone into the forest to collect the *ayahuasca* vine and *yaje* leaves. Tonight they were going to have a session of visions from drinking the extract of these plants to determine what cure should be applied for the backaches. Córdova expressed interest in participating, saying that he had had some experience in this sort of thing. We decided to wait.

Soon the men returned with several two-foot lengths of a vine about wrist size in diameter, but no *yaje* leaves. The vine was sent across the river to a village for preparation, and the men went off again into the forest to look for the lacking ingredient.

Mid-afternoon we took the launch over to the village so that Córdova could check on the medicinal preparations. While he was doing this I tried to photograph a very restless young ocelot that some boys had on a vine leash. Soon Córdova came out of one of the houses and boarded the launch. The motor started and I boarded to see what was up.

FOREWORD

Córdova explained with disgust that the preparations of the vision extract were completely inadequate. The boiling-down process was taking place in a dirty aluminum pot tended by a small boy. Drinking such improperly prepared extract would only cause violent vomiting, intestinal cramps and diarrhea, according to Córdova. He explained that to obtain the desired visions, the brew had to be boiled slowly and with reverence in a special earthenware pot over a low fire. It was dangerous, he said, to take improperly prepared *ayahuasca*.

Córdova's background for making such a critical judgment became evident as our days of collaboration on the forest survey turned into months of joint effort to extract valuable information from the Amazon jungle. A broad field of common interest related to the tropical forest and its inhabitants was revealed as rapport between us developed.

By fascinating bits and pieces the following story of Córdova's life as a young man in the forest came out. In the process my esteem and admiration grew as I became aware of his desire and ability to alleviate human suffering and his frustrated urge to perpetuate the use of his exotic knowledge. All of which extends far beyond the boundaries of the present story.

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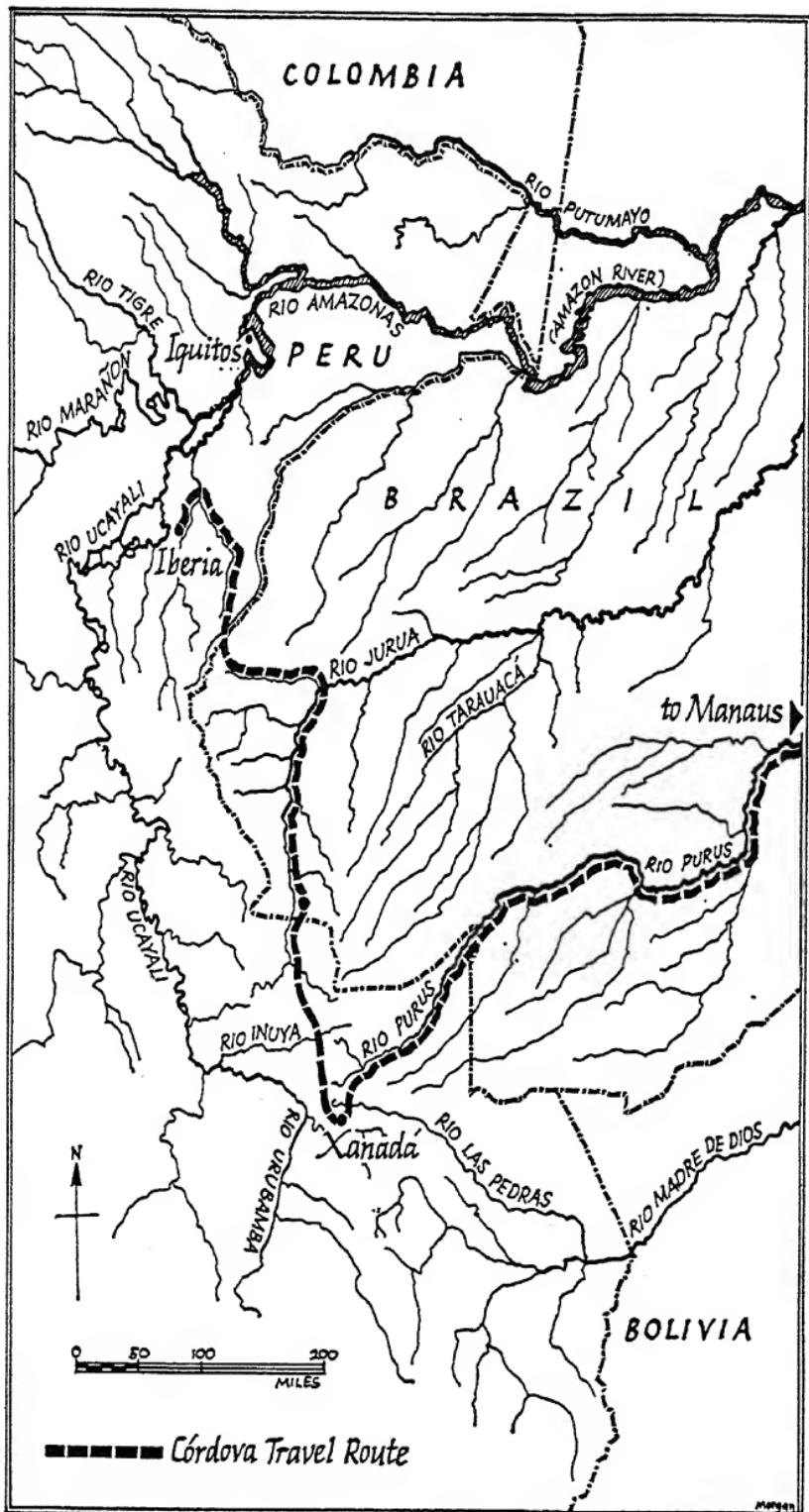
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*Wizard of the
Upper Amazon*



Caucho Camp

THE HAUNTING melancholy cry of a forest tinamou (tropical jungle partridge) floated on the evening air from nearby and was answered so faintly from off in the depths of the jungle that it could hardly be heard. A vague but persistent feeling of foreboding lingered in my thoughts as I tended a fragrant stew bubbling in an iron pot over an open fire. It was 1907, and I was alone in a jungle *caucho* rubber camp. Darkness was approaching and my companions should have returned ravenous with hunger by mid-afternoon. They had gone off in the forest at dawn to tap newly located latex-producing *caucho* trees. It had been my turn to cook, so I had been left to tend camp and prepare a meal for their return.

Now, as I added a couple of sticks to the fire, I remembered the warning of a trader at the last outpost on the Jurua River as we traveled through a corner of Brazil toward this isolated section of Peru. My companions had scoffed at the warning—those soft Brazilian *seringeiros* might be worried about Indians, but not tough Peruvian *caucheros*!

We had come to this totally isolated area on the advice of an old cauchero who had tapped rubber here during an earlier rubber boom. Our camp was on a small tributary of the upper Rio Jurua. There was a small palm-thatched cooking shack and, adjoining it, a larger shelter with supplies stored in the back and our sleeping hammocks hung in the front. And all of this set in a small jungle clearing, to let in some sunlight.

In the fading light of a setting sun a noisy flock of parrots flew over in pairs on their way to a roosting tree, and the sundown cicada buzzed loudly in a nearby tree. The momentary twilight of the tropics was quickly fading into the dark of night. I tried to piece together the plans for the day that my companions had revealed in their conversation before departing this morning. Roqui and Encarnación had planned to fell and tap caucho trees already located some distance from camp. Toribio and Domingo intended to explore for more distant trees. It was possible they might still come in, but more likely now that they would sleep in the forest. I knew they didn't like to travel this trackless forest after dark.

I was only fifteen years old, impatient and hungry, and decided not to wait any longer but to eat

my portion of the stew. I watched the fire and the flickering shadows it cast in our small forest clearing. Night sounds were replacing those of the day. A raucous tree frog started *cur-awking* up in the crotch of a tree. He was soon answered by another. Two *tahuayos* (tropical whippoorwills) carried on a melodious dialogue. Once I thought I heard the men coming, but no one appeared. The fire died down and I decided to cover it with dirt and ashes to hold it till morning.

Frustrated, I went to my hammock and covered myself to avoid the mosquitoes. But sleep would not come. The familiar sound of crickets and other insects provided a continuous pulsating background hum for other intermittent sounds of the night. There was a forest partridge nearby that sang out periodically with a clear flutelike call. A trumpeter bird also floated his call on the heavy night air, and a nocturnal monkey repeated his plaintive piping note over and over in an accelerating sequence. The trumpeter calls seemed to alternate from different directions around the camp, and there were many calls and sounds I had not heard before and could not identify. This increased my uneasiness and I felt for the rifle under my hammock for reassurance.

It had rained in the late afternoon, and now a rotten branch of a big tree came crashing down nearby. This brought me sitting straight up in my hammock. To calm my nerves, I thought to myself, That's the reason for our camp clearing—so none can fall on us.

Settling back into my hammock, I went over the

events that had brought me here to the depths of the forest. In Iquitos I had lived with my father and mother and completed as much schooling as was available. Steamships coming up the Amazon from the Atlantic Ocean to this most inland port brought the news of a rubber boom, and Iquitos merchants began outfitting groups of men to organize rubber-production camps in the forest. Having finished school and with some forest experience already, I persuaded my family to let me go upriver to the town of Iberia. Here my sister's husband was active in rubber trading, and I would have a chance for a start in this growing business. When I arrived at Iberia, Lino agreed to let me go with four of his caucho cutters who were preparing to move into new territory.

We traveled east by canoe on a narrow canal, "*sacarita* Iberia," which connected the Rio Ucayalli with the Rio Tapiche at high water. Going north down the sluggish black-water Tapiche, we came to the mouth of the Rio Blanco. From there we traveled up the Blanco to a small tributary, Lobo. Then, selling our canoe, we packed two days overland to the headwaters of the Rio Ipixuna. Here, in Brazil, we went down the Ipixuna to the Jurua and then up the Jurua until we were back in Peru—or thought we were. No boundaries had yet been marked between the two countries, so it was impossible to be sure. We had established our camp, and the first few days of locating caucho trees around the camp gave us reason to expect this would be a profitable location. The

trip made with four seasoned caucheros had been a challenge and an education for me. My confidence, at fifteen, was unlimited.

Another tropical downpour with thunder and lightning passed over the camp. The cool air caused me to wrap up in my blanket and I dozed off into a troubled sleep.

With the first light of dawn a group of toucans awakened me with their raucous calling from a nearby treetop. I took the shotgun with the idea of getting one for breakfast, but the partridge I had heard the night before made the mistake of showing himself first, and he was soon in my hands. As I turned to go back, a sudden impression of not being alone in the forest startled me and the hair on my neck bristled. I paused to look around. The tall trees were festooned with vines and lianas, some attached to the tree trunks, others hanging free from the upper branches. Small trees and underbrush made it impossible to see very far even though the undergrowth was not thick in this forest of big trees. I could neither see nor hear anything but the jungle and its usual sounds, and I returned to camp with my partridge.

There I stirred up the fire and prepared a spit on which to roast the bird, then went to the stream for fresh water. The creek was slow and clear. By then the sun was sending shafts of sunlight to the forest floor. A dragonfly hovered and darted in and out of the sunlight over the water. I saw the flash of the silvery side of a big *sabalo* fish in the depths of a

pool and thought of catching him later. As I dipped the bucket for water, a slight movement and sound caught my attention.

Turning my head, I found myself surrounded by a group of naked Indians. They had fantastic designs painted in black on their brown bodies. Each had either a wicked lance or a bow and arrow aimed at me. We were thus frozen for a moment without movement or sound. Then one of them stepped forward and took first the hunting knife from my belt and then the bucket from my hand. He was immediately followed by two others, who tied my hands behind my back.

It was all done so quickly, as if by plan, that there was no chance for a struggle—and to what purpose even if I had tried, with the odds at least fifteen to one?

On a command which I could not understand, we all returned to the camp. There, while two stood guard beside me, the others took the camp apart. It was all directed by one man and was well organized. Everything useful was quickly arranged into pack loads. The half-roasted partridge I had put over the fire was portioned out and gulped down quickly. I was given some and I forced myself to eat it, against an unknown future. Our camp shelters went up in flames.

During all this my mind was a hurricane of thoughts, trying to understand what was happening while at the same time searching for something I could do. At one moment I thought surely my com-

panions would return and let go with a fusillade of rifle shots at these savages and set me free. But then I realized all of our firearms were accounted for in the equipment being collected into pack loads. Where were my friends? Had the Indians kept them from coming in last night? What had been done to them? And what were the plans for my future? We had heard stories of cannibals in this area. What chance of escape might there be?

I looked around at the Indians and noticed that my guards were intently watching every move I made, even a turning of the head. All of these men, though not large, seemed well built, muscular. Their movements were smooth and purposeful. Each one was naked except for a belt or band at the waist.

Now my captors formed a single line with me in the middle, the men immediately in front and behind me obviously responsible for my actions. Then we were off through the forest, leaving the camp a smoldering ruin.

As we left and during the first few hours I kept track of the direction of travel. The sun was over my left shoulder, so it was southwest we were going. There was no sign of a trail that I could see, but the pace was fast. The Indians seemed to glide through the forest without effort, while vines and thorns were constantly pulling at me. It was especially difficult for me with my hands tied. I needed them for balance. But from the first moment my instinct had been to show no sign of weakness or emotion, and I kept up somehow.

We maintained a southwesterly direction up and down hills through rolling country. I tried to keep track of the small streams we crossed, as landmarks, but with the exertion of our pace I soon lost track. In the forest the sunlight seldom reached the ground, so it was cool, but with the high humidity and the exertion of trying to keep up I was constantly in a running sweat.

As the pace of travel kept on without let-up I became less and less aware of the details of my surroundings. By mid-afternoon I was exhausted and, even with extreme effort, was stumbling as I walked.

We stopped by a small stream and my hands were untied. By example they indicated that I should wash and rinse my mouth. But when I gulped the water instead of rinsing my mouth, they led me away from the stream. I was dying of thirst, but they would let me have no more water. Pieces of smoked meat were passed around. Mine was so dry I could hardly swallow it, but I knew I had to eat to survive and forced it down.

After only a short time my hands were tied again and we were off. The food helped, and strength to go on came from some reserve, perhaps in the mind. This time it was for all night. As dusk deepened into darkness the pace slowed somewhat to accommodate my difficulties, but we did not stop until daylight.

Stopping again at a small stream, I followed gestured instructions, rinsing my mouth out and swallowing only a small amount of water in spite of the desire to gulp it down. They allowed me to bathe.

My body was covered with scratches from a thousand thorns along the way and my clothes were in tatters. The pause was only a brief one, and we were soon walking again at the forced pace of the day before. This we kept up for another day and another night!

I was near the point of collapse from exhaustion after these two days and two nights of almost continuous forced march. For the last few hours before dawn on the third day I was barely staggering forward. As it was getting light we came up a small hill and stopped. Here my captors opened a well-hidden deposit of supplies. I collapsed on the ground in an agony of fatigue. Even breathing seemed an effort beyond my power. I was in fact barely conscious, my mind able to develop only the most fragmented bits of thought: Where? . . . How? . . . Why? . . .

After several hours of tortured rest and fitful sleep I was prodded into eating and was given a small clay dish of thick sour liquid to drink. This proved to be refreshing and stimulating, and I felt as if I were coming painfully back to life.

Late in the afternoon two Indians came into camp from the direction of our arrival and seemed to report, with many gestures, to the leader. This must have been a rear guard who had been checking to see if we had been followed. I knew that we had not been, for even if one or more of my companions had escaped and gone for help, it would take days to reach the nearest settlement. And the possibility of

their survival seemed very unlikely. The Indians also must have been satisfied, because we rested on through the night, but they did not build a fire.

Before dark one of my guards rubbed crushed leaves of a small shrub on my scratches and cuts, which relieved the itching and pain and also stopped the bleeding. This was done without any show of favor or feeling.

As soon as the sun went down, moisture from the high humidity in the air began to condense on the leaves and was soon dripping from the treetops with a constant patter that continued all night. For protection against this cold dripping dew, the Indians put up individual palm-leaf shelters on stick frames. They were only large enough to sit in, and mine was surrounded by others—with no avenue of escape. It was a night of cold, misery, pain and fear that I will never forget. My whole body ached from unbelievable exertion and I was emotionally shattered by events. My thoughts were still fragmentary and disconnected—mostly of the past. But what of the future? A formless void to be filled by events still undreamed of. I had heard plenty of Indian stories in the villages and camps we had visited on the way to the Jurua. Storytelling was a pastime. But reality in all that I had heard was unclear.

I was prodded from a troubled sleep at dawn. All evidence of our camp was carefully scattered before we set out again. We stopped at the first stream for a bath, and then the march was on again—still southwest, but at a more moderate pace now. The

Indians seemed released from the first pressure of escape from the area of their attack.

I tried to keep track of the days, and I tried to observe the country. I knew that the Rio Jurua was to our right, for we had crossed no major river. It was up and down hills, over fallen trees, through swamps and small streams. Compared to the grueling pace of the first two days and nights, this part of the journey was mild. We stopped every night to rest and traveled only from dawn to dusk.

One day it was cloudy and rainy all day. The forest was eerie, shrouded in whitish mist. The rain was filtered through the foliage starting 150 feet above our heads. The air was heavy, completely saturated with moisture. Every leaf and twig discharged its load of accumulated moisture if touched. This was the kind of day when caucheros stayed in camp, mended their clothes, ate and talked.

On what by my count was the ninth day of travel, I noticed about noon one of the Indians rejoining the line with a small forest deer slung over his shoulder. Later another appeared with two game birds. This was the first hunting I had noticed on the trip. The feeling among the Indians this morning had been different somehow—faces less severe and some conversation back and forth. The pace had definitely picked up again.

About mid-afternoon I saw off to the left a momentary break in the forest, a whole big patch of blue sky. Soon after we passed by what was obviously a cultivated patch of yucca.

We must be nearing a village, I thought. What would the end of the journey bring? Why had these Indians not already killed me? I was quite sure they had killed one, if not all, of my cauchero companions.

The way now led up a long hill. Suddenly there was a loud squawking of macaws and almost immediately we stepped into a village clearing filled with naked Indians—men, women and children. They crowded around and pushed one another for a better view. There was an immediate hubbub of chattering that stopped abruptly when a thin, ancient, long-haired old man stepped calmly through the throng. He came up to where I stood, my hands still tied behind my back, and deliberately looked me over.

I looked back at him just as deliberately. I saw a very old man with a distinct Oriental cast to his face. A feathered headband held back a shock of reddish-brown hair that came to the middle of his back. A few long yellowish whiskers on his upper lip and chin added to the Oriental look. And whereas every other Indian in sight was naked, he wore a simple sleeveless garment of coarse white cotton that came almost to his bony knees. This, I knew, must be the chief.

I was determined not to move an eyelash or to show a sign of emotion or fear. The noise soon started up again: children squealed; men and women grimaced at one another and shouted; the macaws were squawking again.

The chief stepped close, carefully unbound my arms and instructed my captors to remove the tat-

tered remnants of my clothes. More people were joining the jostling crowd of what must have been over a hundred. A group of very old women came up to look me over. They tested my solid flesh and cackled. But one old woman was of a different mood. She came up with a heavy palm club in her hand and began to mutter angrily as she glared at me. Suddenly, with a wailing screech, she brought up the club and came at me in a frenzy.

The old chief, still at my side, gave a sharp command. The leader of my captors brusquely grabbed the club from the old woman and with a single, deft swing of it knocked her to the ground with a crushing, killing blow. A gasping sigh passed through the crowd as the club was tossed onto the body and, at a command from the chief, the other old women dragged the corpse away.

Another command from the chief, and two of my captors led me behind the old man into the largest of a group of conical houses. The roof and walls were one and came clear to the ground. Inside it was dark and smoky.



Strange Village

WHEN MY EYES adjusted to the darkness inside this large conical house I could see that it sheltered many people. The only source of light was two or three small cooking fires and in one side a small door opening that would allow only a single person to pass. Many things were hanging from the pole rafters in the storage space above, and groups of small hammocks hung between upright poles that supported the roof.

My hands were loosely tied again, in front this time so that I could use them. The chief motioned me to one of the hammocks and I sat down. He and my captors moved to one side and started a discussion that went on for many hours, with different people coming and going. Two or three old women

with black palm clubs took up vigilant guard duty near my hammock. I was aware, in the closed dark confines of the house, of a strange, persistent, musky odor given off by these people.

Soon a young girl brought a gourd dish of a thick semi-liquid drink that was much more strongly fermented than that which we had on the trip. I refused it after a taste. She came back, after speaking to the chief, with a similar liquid having the aroma of bananas. This I drank with relish and felt somewhat refreshed.

I remember very little of those few weeks. It was a nightmare of confusion and depression, giving way to a gradual adjustment to my strange surroundings. In thinking back over the events of my capture and trek to the village, I came to the conclusion that my companions had all been killed. If any had survived they would never be able to find me here. I thought of them and my family and sank into the depths of a depression that lasted for several days. Gradually a feeling of determination replaced the depression—a determination to somehow shape events to my advantage.

From the pattern of daily routine it was evident that there was no immediate threat to my life. I understood not a single word of the constant talk that went on around me. It seemed that there was always a commotion in this house, where some twenty men, women and children lived; two or three cooking fires were always burning; pet animals and birds tamed from the forest wandered in and out. Day

seemed little different from night in the windowless shelter. I was taken out for exercise at least twice a day, always well guarded.

The Indians' stares of curiosity and grimaces when they looked at me diminished as the days passed. A feeling of some confidence returned when I realized that the children were showing me a considerable clandestine friendly attention. If I were regarded and spoken of with ill feeling by the parents, this would not happen.

A few incidents of the early weeks do stand out in my mind. Several days after I arrived a group of men dragged in a woman completely bound, hand and foot, with vines and gagged. She was brought to the chief's section of the house, where I was also kept. When the gag was removed the captive screamed and raged, writhing on the floor, straining her bonds. The men went off and left her; the old women took over, as directed by the chief.

During the first two days the captive would break into a ranting rage, screaming and frothing at the mouth every time anyone approached, but she was quiet when left alone. She was obviously becoming weak from lack of food.

On the third day one of the old women of the tribe came up. She stood and watched for a long time as the captive writhed on the floor, trying to break the bonds. Finally the old one, who was one of my guards also, shook her head and muttered to herself. She went away but was soon back with a bundle of various herbs and a wooden bowl with some water

in it. The herbs she chopped and crushed in the water until she had a green semi-liquid mass. Then she approached the bound woman, who again began to struggle. At this the old woman took gobs of her mixture and spattered them on the struggling, straining body of the captive, until she was practically covered with a green film of shredded herbs. Gradually the struggling stopped and the old woman left her victim apparently asleep.

The next morning she came back and cut off all the bonds. There was no outburst of rage, no struggle. The captive was led out of the house by the arm, as if in a trance. Later she was brought back, bathed, and left sitting, unbound, in a hammock. The next day she placidly went to work with the other women—a slave, perhaps, but not ill treated.

I had heard about jungle medicine, but this was my first exposure. What of this was in store for me?

Some days later, perhaps two weeks after my arrival—I lost track of time—I was led out of the house to find the tribe assembled. My guards, or escort, took me up to the chief in front of the silent crowd. He was dressed in his white robe again. There appeared to be no feeling of threat in the crowd, but my insides were crawling. I was determined not to show it.

The chief started a melodious chant and took from an assistant some branches covered with leaves that had a fragrant odor. He brushed my body with these as he chanted. Then a bowl was brought full of liquid, also fragrant but different. I was care-

fully bathed with this by an assistant as the chief chanted.

It was all over in a few minutes. Without any great show of reaction toward the ceremony, the crowd quietly broke up, apparently satisfied.

I was mystified and awaited some reaction to my ceremonial bath. None came, and the import was a complete mystery to me because I still understood not a word of the strange Indian language.

A few days later there started what I recognized as attempts to communicate with me in words. Pointing to nearby objects or handing them to me, the chief would say a word and wait expectantly for me to repeat it and then again, to fix it in my memory. This helped to relieve the monotony of my restrained existence. I cooperated voluntarily to relieve boredom.

Another time I was led out in the early morning to find a crowd gathered around the white-robed chief. He was chanting now in front of a newborn boy in his mother's arms. The chants sounded the same as before, and the ceremony with the fragrant leaves and bath were the same. When they finished with the baby, it was repeated again with me—which made me think. It seemed like a natural baptism ceremony. Were they baptizing me into the tribe? The lack of communication between us still made questions or explanations impossible.

The restraints on my existence were gradually removed, but I was watched very closely, even at night, and was never left unattended. Other words

were added to my vocabulary of names of objects. Slowly a link of understanding was developing.

Several weeks after my arrival I was again presented in solemn ceremony before the assembled tribe. This time the ceremony was different. The chief began a chant I had not heard before, and the others responded and participated in a shuffling kind of dance without moving about. It was long and involved. In the end the chief took a branch of large leaves and carefully brushed them the full length of my body from the four directions of the compass —east first, then from the west, the north and the south.

After this I was taken down to the nearby creek where I now took a daily bath. Here a special herbal bath had been prepared in a large pot over a fire. It was only lukewarm as they ceremoniously bathed me. Then with gestures I was instructed to sit down, holding my knees under my chin, and to remain motionless. A coarse hand-woven cotton cloth was then draped to cover me completely. It was suffocating underneath. With the small daily incidents of life in the village I had become less and less apprehensive. But now the old fears of my capture and arrival crowded back. Was this a sacrifice ceremony? Would it be better to jump up and resist and at least die fighting?

I tried to pray for guidance, but it had been such a long time since the days when I had had some meager religious instruction in school in Iquitos that I couldn't really find any words. Time dragged; my

nerves were tense awaiting—what? Near-suffocation and muscle cramps became almost unbearable.

Finally the cape was withdrawn with a flourish and what I interpreted as a joyous shout went up from the onlookers. It was the first time I had seen anything like pleasant expressions on the assembled faces. The men crowded around, smiling and talking rapidly. I could not understand, but the gestures seemed to say that I was now one of them. They made no gesture of leading me around any more. We just drifted back to the village. I still had no idea of where I was expected to fit into this strange primitive world, but it seemed that I was slowly being accepted as a member of the tribe.

Shortly after the ceremony I was lined up with a group of young men and we were given a piece of woody green stem to chew. It was astringent but not unpleasant. In a few hours our teeth all turned black. I learned later that this was called *paka nixpo* and came from the stem of a forest shrub. If it was used several times during youth, the teeth would be protected from decay. A few weeks after the treatment our teeth turned white again.

It was at this time also that I was taken aside by the old man and given a piece of coarse string. By gesture he indicated that I should tie it around my waist and then he showed me how to tie up my penis with it as all the men and boys did. I learned later that it was considered the height of impropriety to be seen with the cock hanging down even though otherwise stark naked.



Visions

AFTER perhaps six months with the Huni Kui * I had become accustomed to living in the nude, to eating their unsalted diet of jungle game, the few products of their primitive agriculture and wild fruit. And I understood a few words of their strange vocabulary.

Now it became evident that something new was in the offing. My diet was changed drastically and was carefully controlled by the old women who were my constant custodians. Instead of being given the mixed fare of the daily take from the jungle, which consisted of roasted, smoked or boiled portions of nearly any one of the jungle animals and birds, along with vegetables and fruits in various forms,

* Meaning the Chosen People or the True, Genuine People.

the restrictions became pronounced. For several days my food was limited to the carefully roasted white breast of the jungle partridge, of which there were several varieties, roasted yucca, and a mushy liquid concoction of cooked and mashed bananas or sweet potatoes. In addition to this diet, every two or three days I was obliged to drink an herbal preparation of jarring odd flavors which produced unexpected reactions. These drinks were given to me firmly but with assurance that they would not harm me. One caused violent vomiting; another was a laxative; and still another caused accelerated heartbeat, fever and copious sweating. I was given baths and massages and felt exhilarated afterward.

After perhaps ten days of this treatment, during which everyone—including the chief, who personally supervised the affair—showed solicitude for my well-being and expectation of favorable reaction, it came to an end with a day of fasting and face painting. A group of ten men had special intricate designs painted on their faces in red paint made of achote. Late in the afternoon, perhaps an hour before sunset, the group, which I recognized by this time as consisting of the important individuals in the tribe, gathered at the chief's dwelling. After a short consultation, in which I naturally had no part, we formed in a single file and with a soft rhythmic chant marched slowly off into the jungle with the whole village silently looking on.

(My description of what is to come is based largely on later repetitions of these events, when I

had attained sufficient understanding of my strange environment to interpret what was seen and heard or emerged from unknown recesses of the mind.)

An almost imperceptible trail led us gently downward along a forest-covered hillside through a stand of tremendous trees of great variety in shape and form. After a half hour's slow walk we arrived at a small clearing in the undergrowth, a jungle glade with a small creek running through it.

Here the large fluted columns of the giant trees were even more imposing, because the undergrowth had been cleared out, giving the impression of a great vaulted cathedral. Shafts of sunlight brilliantly illuminated occasional isolated spots. At sunset the birds of the jungle repeat momentarily the strange cacophony of calls heard at sunrise. Nearby the plaintive flutelike call of the tinamou was answered by another in the distance. A far-off raucous cry of the jungle falcon echoed through the forest, and on the distant sound horizon rose briefly the roar of a band of howler monkeys getting set for the night, huddled together in some giant tree crown.

In our secluded jungle glade the calm of sunset deepened. One of the Indians imitated several bird calls and from the depths of the jungle these were answered from several directions. The chief showed satisfaction with this indication that we were well guarded and need not fear unwanted intrusion.

Our group (myself excluded), knowing what to expect, went calmly about strange preparations. Four of the ten men withdrew slightly and took up

guard positions on four sides of the clearing. In the center a small fire was being kindled from a glowing coal brought from the village in a small clay pot. Several feet from the fire were low wooden stools set in a circle with the legs firmly in the ground.

The soft chanting continued intermittently, but I was unable to understand any of it. Finally the participants took positions at their stools as directed by the chief. My place was beside him.

A large bundle of dried leaves was brought and laid beside the fire by one of the guards, who then silently withdrew. The chief, chanting a different sequence from that I had heard before and softly accompanied by the others, approached the bundle of leaves and broke off some small bunches. The chanting pace quickened and the mood changed. A branch of leaves was placed on the fire and a cloud of thick pungent white smoke rose slowly from the fire. Not a breath of air now moved in the intensely silent jungle. With a large scoop-shaped fan made of brilliant feathers, the chief now carried great volumes of the fragrant smoke to each of the participants, taking special pains to see that I was well enveloped in this incense. With this came another chant, the meaning of which I learned later. The intensity of feeling, the chants and fragrant smoke seemed to create a trancelike atmosphere within the group. Every movement and action was made with the greatest calm and deliberation.

A slight change of mood and intonation came when a medium-sized clay vessel, highly decorated

with incised motifs, was placed beside the fire. A small dipper was plunged into the vessel and six small palm-nut cups were filled with a dark-green liquid. Each of us around the fire was given one of these cups by the chief, who brought mine last. Giving it to me, he held up his own in front and indicated that we should drink.

Momentarily I hesitated and thought of refusing, but already I was in a semi-trance, and in such a calm but intense situation the impulse passed, and I drank the liquid down in a gulp, as did the others. It was a bland concoction that tasted rather like boiled green corn. After taking the potion everyone calmly sat down on his low stool around the small fire. The chanting continued but became more animated and moved into a high falsetto of a florid, tremulous character with each participant adding his own harmonious obbligato, coming together in unison with the chief on certain key words for continuity. The sequence of what happened next has always been beyond recall, but from many other such ceremonies continuing over a period of years I have reconstructed this first experience.

A high pulsating whine started softly in my ears and increased with intensity until a violent shock passed through my entire nervous system. A feeling of great nausea overcame me, followed by fleeting sensations of intense erotic stimulation, then utter confusion of sense perceptions. Chaotic visions of various colored lights and forms dominated my visual senses. Blue and green shades predominated,

interspersed with intense flashes of other colors. Emotional involvements of undefinable content accompanied the color visions. Many other confused elements entered the visions after the pure colors and abstract shapes. These included jungle animals and natural forms, but it was not until many months and seances later that I established enough control of the vision progression and content to attempt to describe or explain these sequences.

Eventually, with no real sense of time, I drifted into complete lethargy that progressed gradually to deep but troubled sleep.

I awoke with a shaft of sunlight stabbing through the forest canopy to strike me in the face. I felt lost and completely disoriented, unable to distinguish clearly the shapes and forms of my surroundings. My first conscious thread of reality was the animated morning chorus of several jungle birds. My companions, aware of my return to consciousness, calmly encouraged me by gesture and word to enter again the rational world.

The men sat around in conversation, apparently exchanging impressions of the night and commenting on my reactions. By noon we were back in the village, but I was far from the same as when I had left it. Food helped restore my equilibrium, but for some time, especially when I was asleep at night, snatches of visions returned.

After spending the night in the forest sharing strange visions with my captors, it became noticeably easier for me to understand the meaning of their

previously unintelligible language. It was still many months before I learned to speak with any fluency, but I began to understand most of what was said to me after our first seance in the forest.

Soon afterward I was taken to a secluded camp in the forest to learn how the vision-producing extract was made. Early one morning I was instructed to leave the village with one of the old men whom they called Nixi Xuma Waki (Maker of the Vine Extract). For a while we were accompanied by a small group of well-armed younger men, but these Indians soon disappeared into the forest. Late in the afternoon, after a leisurely day on a meandering forest trail, we came to a small clearing beside a small creek. There were a few large stones around a fireplace and a small palm-thatched shelter on a framework of poles. An assortment of clay pots, dippers and a pile of firewood were also present.

We set about preparing for the night. A fire was kindled; we hung small hammocks under the shelter and ate a small portion of smoked meat and drank fruit mush from one of the clay pots. Nixi (the Vine, for short) exchanged birdcalls with some unseen phantoms in the forest. This happened at intervals during the night, and it was evident that we were well guarded to counteract any thought of escape on my part or unwanted intrusion by others. A soft unintelligible chant was also sung by Nixi Xuma off and on during the night as he fed the fire.

At dawn I was awakened by the repeated call of a forest dove and the rapid trip-hammer pounding

of a woodpecker on a hollow tree. The chill and dampness of the night air still hung on the camp and a light mist drifted in the treetops as the sunlight slanted in through the upper crowns. A group of toucans started a raucous exchange and soon the forest was alive with the daylight sounds that were so different from those of the night.

As I raised my head from the hammock and sat up, old Nixi glanced from the fire he tended and nodded a greeting. Again he exchanged bird calls with our unseen guards in the forest. We ate some food and arranged the various large and small earthen pots around the fireplace before Nixi signaled for me to follow him into the forest. He took a stone ax and his bamboo knife.

This was the first time I had been more or less free in the jungle since my capture, but I knew the two of us were not alone. Attempted escape passed through my mind, but I rejected the idea as impossible.

My companion moved through the tangled forest undergrowth with ease and stealth, hardly disturbing leaf or branch. I found it difficult to keep up. Every thorn and vine seemed to grab me. At one place I disturbed a bush that Nixi had just passed, and a swarm of stinging wasps were at me from a small papery nest hanging on the underside of a large leaf. In a half dozen places I had burning welts on my naked body as I rushed away out of range. In a few moments I was given an antidote in the form of leaves to chew and place on the stings, and the

pain disappeared at once.

After this we went at a more deliberate pace that gave me a chance to observe how Nixi flowed through the underbrush. Eventually, as all of my senses became attuned to conditions in the forest, I could make my own way under the worst conditions and keep up with anyone in the tribe.

After an hour or so we came to a huge buttressed tree with several strands of a vine the size of my wrist hanging from the top branches. The vine was examined in every visible detail—the bark, the strands themselves, their thickness, the roots and the soil, an examination that was accompanied by a chant. Finally old Nixi tested one stem by pulling it with the whole weight of his body. When it did not yield he went up it easily and quickly, hand over hand, to the tree crown above. Here he cut loose one of the stems, which came tumbling down with a crash. Returning to the ground, he began to cut with the stone ax, and with my help, this length of vine into three-foot pieces, and we carried as many as we could lift back to camp.

Then we went off into the forest in another direction until we found a small shrub with large leaves that attracted my companion's attention. He pointed out to me the strangely marked bark of the main stem and the shape of the leaves as distinguishing characteristics. The bark had odd-shaped varicolored markings similar to those on a boa's skin. The leaves were lance-shaped and had peculiar vein markings that conformed to the lance shape of the

leaf itself. Several dozen leaves were carefully selected, picked and taken back to our camp.

There the serious preparations started, accompanied by almost continuous chanting. First the vine was cut into one-foot pieces with the stone ax and pounded on a flat stone with a large wooden mallet until it was well mashed.

The old man chanted:

Nixi honi, vision vine
boding spirit of the forest
origin of our understanding
give up your magic power
to our potion
illuminate our mind
bring us foresight
show us the designs
of our enemies
expand our knowledge
expand our understanding
of our forest*

A layer of mashed vine pieces was then carefully arranged in the bottom of a large new clay pot. On top of this was laid a layer of the leaves in the shape of a fan. And as he did this Nixi chanted:

*Bush with markings of the serpent
give us your leaves
for our potion
bring us favor*

* Vine whose extract produces visions.

of the boa
source of good fortune

Then alternating layers of mashed vine and leaves were put in place until the pot was more than half full. Clear water from the stream was then added until the plant material was well covered.

A slow fire was started under the pot and the cooking was maintained at a very low simmer for many hours until the liquid was reduced to less than half.

When the cooking process was completed the fire was removed and, after cooling, the plant material was withdrawn from the liquid. After several hours of further cooling and settling, the clear green liquid was carefully dipped off into small clay pots, each fitted with a tight cover.

The entire process took three days, being done with utter calmness and deliberation. The interminable chants accompanied each step, invoking the spirits of the vine, the shrub and the other forest spirits.

This carefully and reverently prepared extract provided the potion for many subsequent ayahuasca sessions in the peaceful and secluded forest glade, sessions that progressed to incredible vision fantasies.

A few days after returning from the forest with Nixi the Honi Maker, with a number of small pots containing the potent green liquid, one of the hunters came to the chief. It was early in the evening as we sat around the small fire in the center of the chief's house. Xurikaya (Colored Bird) came in

quietly and sat down. It seemed almost as though his coming was expected. The conversation led to the subject of hunting, and soon Xuri (the Bird) was telling a long melancholy story of bad luck in his hunting.

“The last time I came upon the large herd of wild pigs that usually ranged in my assigned hunting territory I approached by misjudgment too near the head of the band. The old sow leader saw me and gave the grunt of alarm before I could loose an arrow. The whole band disappeared as if by magic. Now they seem to have abandoned my hunting ground. At least they no longer follow their usual feeding circuit. They leave no trace.

“The other evening I was calling a tinamou. When it finally came after much too long a time of calling back and forth I shot it and found it full of worms from a previous wound—almost eaten up.

“The band of howler monkeys in my area manage to piss and crap on me from the treetops but somehow avoid my arrows. The forest deer sense my movements from afar and avoid me by leaving confusing tracks. The fruit trees that produce the favorite food of the forest animals this year seem to bear nothing but leaves.

“My family is being fed by others, which brings me great shame and leaves me with obligations that I will never be able to pay off unless my luck changes.”

Finally the chief said, “Come back tomorrow night and we will look at it again, with others. Bring

your hunting equipment with you."

Xumu sent word by his old women to a small select group of the best hunters. They came to sit around his fire the next evening, and the palaver went on and on for half the night.

Xurikaya brought all of his hunting gear. It consisted of snares made of strong twine of various thicknesses treated with beeswax; a large open basket woven of palm fronds of a type used to catch the small jungle partridges that sleep together on the ground at night; several lances for night hunting; a large bow with a dozen arrows of various types; and finally his bamboo knife, which was worn on a string around his neck.

These were passed around the group and all were examined minutely and the defects pointed out and commented on. The snares had not been properly treated with herbs to eliminate the smell of man, hence no animals would approach them. The partridge basket was just a little too big to handle easily in the undergrowth and catch birds. The lances had surely been affected by *iuxibo* (evil spirits). The painted designs on the bow and arrows could be improved in many details to attract favorable assistance from the forest spirits.

After the equipment had been examined, Xuri was questioned closely about his preparations for the hunt: his use of herbal baths to bring good luck and to remove body odors; special diets for getting ready to hunt certain animals; the use of charms for finding favorite game animals.

Then came a minute dissection and discussion of Xurikaya's recent hunting experiences and failures. Finally, about midnight, it was agreed all around the fire that a honi-drinking and vision session in the forest sanctuary was needed to solve Xuri's problem.

On the following day the chief called the same group together again and prescribed in great detail the diet and purges to be used in preparation for this coming session.

When several days of obeying these instructions had passed, there was the face-painting ritual and then the slow late-afternoon trip to the isolated forest meeting place just as before. Xumu led the way, followed by Xurikaya and myself and the expert hunters.

This time I understood much more of what was said among them and was more clearly aware of my surroundings and of course knew something of what to expect, as we followed the same route through the forest of giant trees to the hidden jungle glade. We got there about sunset, and the upper crowns and branches of the great trees were illuminated in brilliant sunlight, but only an occasional deflected shaft of sunlight broke the gloom on the forest floor.

Again the four guards took their places at the edges of the clearing, withdrawn from the participants. A small fire was kindled and the ancient and fragile chief, chanting an invocation to the spirits of the forest, placed dried leaves on the fire. After a crackling sound, a cloud of fragrant smoke billowed up. Each of us was again bathed in the smoke

and its fragrant tranquillity.

This time it was extract I had helped to make that was passed around in the small palm cups, and I was determined to control myself and participate more fully in the sequence of visions.

Each of us drank his cupful of *honi xuma*, the vision extract.* The chanting gradually took on the high falsetto quality, with each one in the circle adding his tremulous obbligato to the chief's chant, again coming together on key words which gave emphasis and continuity to the flow of sound. As before, in a few minutes a pulsating hum dominated my consciousness, followed by a violent muscle spasm as soon as the pulsations merged to a continuous sound. Nausea did not appear this time, but a flow of other sensations progressed through my consciousness, their content impossible to describe in terms of the rational world. Exotic sensations, erotic in nature, produced indescribable feelings of pleasure and exhilaration. And I had the impression of being free of my body, capable of actions, sensations and knowledge completely divorced from my physical being.

The sense of time disappeared completely and perhaps the impressions felt were very fleeting with relation to normal consciousness. Colored visions began to dominate the scene, and the chanting seemed to intrude and take over control of the progression of visions. After unorganized visions developed, of colored forms and abstract shapes dominated by in-

* Extract from the vision vine.

tense blues, natural objects of the forest began to appear—in vague, imprecise outline at first, but soon in unimaginable detail.

With the chant of the boa, a giant constrictor appeared slowly gliding through the forest. Blue lights intensified an intricate design of scroll configurations that seemed to float along the boa's spine. Light flashed from his eyes and tongue. The bold patterns on the snake's skin glowed with intense and varied colors.

I was to learn later that the boa was greatly admired by these Indians for his ability to move silently through the forest and capture other animals. To handle a boa and pass a finger over the outlines of the patterns on his skin brought good luck in hunting. The boa visions, brought on by a special chant, therefore came at the start of all auspicious seances dealing with the hunt. Other snakes followed the great boa—a giant bushmaster, a fer-de-lance, and many more.

Next came the birds, in particular members of the hawk family, which is thought to be the source of knowledge about the forest. With the special hawk chant there came first into the visions an enormous harpy eagle in flight, darting in and out through jungle vegetation on lightning-quick maneuvers. Finally he alighted, spread his giant wings, displaying his creamy white breast and striped wings, then a jet-black back. Turning his head and raising the neck feathers into a magnificent crest, the eagle flashed enormous baleful yellow eyes at us

and snapped his hooked scimitar of a beak.

A snake-eating hawk, the forest sentinel who when disturbed gives the alarm with a shrill far-carrying call, alighted and hopped around with wings spread downward, as when attacking a snake. He was followed by a parade of birds that served as sources of food. Each one repeated its various calls and displayed some characteristic of its habitat that would be helpful in the hunt.

Next came the animals, large and small, each with its own chant. The procession took all night and would be impossible for me to describe; much of it I no longer recall, since the knowledge did not originate from my consciousness or experience.

In the morning, jungle sounds and an occasional shaft of sunlight penetrated the depths of the forest to awaken the lethargic phantom-viewers from their troubled dreams. The usual unfermented fruit gruel was passed around to drink. After exchanging impressions of the night, the chief questioned Xuri-kaya.

“You saw the action, heard the calls, talked with the spirits. Can you dominate them now?”

“Great chief, Xumu Nawa, Dominator of all the Spirits, leader of the Huni Kui, my understanding is renewed, increased. The forest will provide for all my needs now,” he answered.

The chief turned to me. “The honi xuma penetrated deeper this time. We will try again soon.”

All I could do, in my still confused state, was nod. Soon we were all on our way back to the village,

where an inquisitive group awaited our arrival. I could tell from the remarks and glances in my direction that my progress was watched with satisfaction.

Again my understanding of the language and activities of the village increased rapidly. After this second session of visions, the role I was expected to play in this strange world began to unfold out of the pattern of incidents in the flow of daily tribal life.

I found the people pleasant and friendly but undemonstrative and reserved as individuals. Separate from the group or tribe, they had no private point of view. Individually they expressed little if any emotion, and habitually their faces were unrevealing stolid masks showing nothing of inner feelings. The children were treated with kindness and understanding. The only punishment came occasionally from older children of the same family.

They all bathed several times a day in the small creek near the village. Body hair was eliminated by applying a tree resin to the skin. Only the chief let his hair and whiskers grow. The men wore their hair in a short bobbed style. The women had bangs across their foreheads, their hair hanging shoulder length in the back. They were a strong, vigorous and industrious people.

In the principal house of the village, Chief Xumu had a section separated off from the other families also using the house. From the first day I was a part of this special enclave. And as the days passed, it

became obvious that I was neither a slave nor destined to be eaten. As my understanding and participation increased, it also became apparent that the chief observed, controlled and directed everything that involved me, including diet. From my privileged position I gradually became aware also of how Xumu held his tribe together. The activities of the entire group were to a degree under his control and supervision. Hunting territories and planting areas were assigned. The results were observed and adjustments made when necessary.

Conditions for hunting were especially good during the early part of the dry season, before preparations for planting could start. In order not to kill off all game near the village, small hunting camps were set up at this time of the year at a distance of several days' travel into the forest. These were located and organized under directions from the chief.

Xumu's knowledge of the forest for several days' journey in all directions from the village was phenomenal. This came from his own experience when he was younger and could travel and from the daily reports brought back by the hunters, who all reported to him on the territorial movement of several bands of wild pigs and monkeys. These bands were relatively easy to keep track of because of their group habits and organization. Animals that had more tenuous contact among their own kind required greater intuition and skill to bag.



Hunting Camp

SHORTLY after the second session of visions with the phantoms of the forest, it was decided that I should participate in one of the hunting camps. In this way I would make use of the experience from the visions and increase my knowledge of the forest.

Nixi was assigned the task of preparing me and my hunting gear for the trip. Everything had to be made especially for my use—a bow and the various types of arrows, several lances and a bamboo knife. I was carefully taught how to make all of these, and their construction took several days. After that came several days more of instruction on using the bow. The villagers watched with obvious approval my eager participation and the rapid progress I made. For myself, anticipation increased with

each day of preparation.

The day before our departure finally came, and the six of us who were to go on the hunting trip went through prehunt rituals which the chief prepared for us. There were several special potions to drink, herbal baths, and finally the exposure of our bodies to the smoke from several different fire smudges, on each of which burned either the hair of an animal or the feathers of a bird we would be hunting. On the last fire burned the feathers of the harpy eagle, the greatest hunter of the treetops.

All this activity was carried out with ceremony and chants to the spirits of the animals and the forest to bring good luck to our expedition. On the evening before we left for the hunting camp there was a beautiful cloudless sky, sign of the dry season to come. As darkness increased and the stars began to show, a group gathered outside in the village center to enjoy the pleasant evening coolness after a hot day.

A silent shadow floated in the deepening dusk and landed on a bare branch of a dead tree close at hand. The excited cry of *weno* (owl) went through the group. A chant started and everyone but the chief joined arms to dance. The animation increased, and the chants were hilarious insults to the owl from the forest animals, transmitted by the hunters.

“*Weno*, I was with *awa* the tapir yesterday. He said that he would use your oversize beak to make a soup spoon for his personal use. Whoo! Whoo!”

“Hooter, the last time I talked with *taxao* the

deer, he was scraping the ground with his hoof and he said he would save the scrapings for you. Whoo! Whoo!"

"Silent-wings, *yungururu* the tinamou told me that your leg bone would make a good whistle to imitate his call for a sleeping companion. Whoo! Whoo!"

"Big Eyes, *hono* the pig said he would teach you to root in the ground for worms. Whoo! Whoo!"

To get revenge on these animals who had so insulted him, the owl was expected to direct the hunters' arrows to vital points in the bodies of the animals named, when next a hunt was undertaken. Therefore the appearance of the owl just before the hunt was considered the best sign of good luck. The songs and dances lasted until he flew away. As he left the owl was chanted an invitation to return, and the exhausted villagers retired to their hammocks.

At daylight the six of us were assisted in getting our gear together and given plenty of advice on how to conduct the expedition. Chief Xumu spent his time giving Nixi last-minute instructions on my education and protection. Before sunrise we set off in single file in a southwesterly direction. There was no trail and we left very little sign of our passage through the forest undergrowth.

Natakoa (Forest Man), who I learned was one of the best hunters in the village, took the lead, with Nixi (the Vine) bringing up the rear. My place was in front of Nixi. The front man commanded the march and the only person allowed to comment on

our progress was the man in the rear. On this occasion we went silently through the forest at a rapid but unforced pace. My efforts were concentrated on watching how the man in front of me made his way through the vegetation without getting hung up.

We walked the whole day without change of pace or more than momentary stops. Our route led through upland country without swamps. We crossed several small streams where I would have drunk water but was not allowed to. These Indians, I found, very seldom drank pure water, all liquids being prepared with fruit or vegetable extracts. We carried with us a supply of fermented concentrate prepared from manihot root. This added to water would be ready from a clay jar when we stopped for the night.

During the day I found myself in good physical condition and able to keep up without any trouble. Before dusk we stopped near a small stream and made minimum preparations for spending the night. This consisted merely of finding places grouped together where each individual could sit under a small roof of palm leaves to break the drip of dewdrops from the forest. No fire was built.

We all bathed in the stream, drank our small portion of the prepared liquid and ate some smoked meat from our pack. By this time the gloom of night was deepening on the forest floor and the night sounds of the jungle were replacing those of the day. Close by a jungle partridge sounded its plaintive call and he repeated it several times during the night.

HUNTING CAMP

A few tree frogs started an alternating dialogue back and forth. To this was added various buzzes and hummings of insects. All of these sounds were discussed and identified by my companions. Off and on the exquisite fragrance of a flowering forest jasmine floated on the evening air, drifting with the imperceptible air currents.

Before sleep settled on the group, the events of the day were reviewed in the minutest detail. Animal signs such as tracks, droppings, chewed fruit, odors and calls were recalled. Most of these I had missed. Significant plants along the trail, such as fruit trees and the state of their flowers or fruit as game food, were discussed. The conversation gradually drifted into silence and sleep.

At dawn we were awakened abruptly by a band of howler monkeys singing to the first rays of morning sunlight striking the treetops. I was stiff and cold from sleeping naked in a sitting position. Ice-cold drops of dew falling from the leaves stung my body as soon as I left the tiny shelter. Mist drifted through the forest canopy and filtered the light to a ghostly gray.

We munched silently on smoked meat and then scattered the leaves of our small palm shelters. All other indications of our presence were carefully obliterated before we put on our packs and moved on.

The second day was much the same as the first, but I was determined to improve my jungle lore. At a small stream crossing I noted a single three-toed track of a tapir, heard toucans feeding in a tree,

saw the small fruit they had dropped on the ground. At one point I was aware of the pungent musky smell of wild pig before we arrived at the site where they had been rooting up the earth of the forest floor.

Where we crossed a dry rocky ledge we heard a dry rattling vibration out of sight. The leader immediately veered off on another course and soon we stopped. Taking off our packs, Nixi took me carefully back to show me a giant bushmaster coiled around its nest, a conical hump of soil. I was then taught how to sense the fetid odor of this snake as a danger signal and told that I would learn to sense the other snakes also.

That second night in camp I was not without my comment, but it was evident I still had missed most of the jungle signs. At midday on the third day from the village we arrived at our appointed hunting grounds and picked a location for our camp—a flat bench formation several feet above the rocky course of a small clear stream. Here three of us, including Nixi and myself, started preparing the hunting camp. The three others were sent out in different directions to scout the game signs and hunting conditions.

First we chose a location between four small trees where a palm-leaf roof could be built on a vine-and-pole framework. Material for this we gathered from the forest around us. By the time the scouts had returned at dusk, the shelter was ready with space for six small hammocks and a fire burning in the

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middle under a meat-smoking platform of interwoven green sticks.

Each of the scouts had brought back game: two partridges, a small forest deer and a pair of monkeys. These were cleaned and the choicest tidbits put low over the fire for fast roasting for our first camp meal. The rest was prepared for slow roasting and smoking on the platform.

That night, lying in our hammocks, we heard the minutest details of the hunt in addition to a review of hunting conditions that had been observed in the area.

Raci (Bird Hunter) spoke first.

“Nearby are many roosting places of partridges. I have located their droppings on the ground. We will have full moon in a few nights and I will bring them in. Over the next ridge is a large tree with small fruit almost ripe. The birds are just beginning to come. They start arriving before the monkeys. The branches there are good for shooting platforms and there are plenty of vines we can climb to reach the branches.

“It was time to start back and I had no game. Just as I turned to come back toward camp a small ground-sleeping tinamou sent out his sad call, close to where I was, and he was answered by another. You know why their evening call is so sad? They don’t like to sleep alone and at sunset each one wanders around aimlessly calling and calling until an answer comes back from somewhere, and then the two move closer and closer together, guided by the calls. And

so they find a sleeping partner. I answered the call and found I was between the two birds. So I backed up between the buttresses of a big tree where the ground could be seen for a good distance in front of me, and I started calling the birds to me. You know that it is dangerous to call the tinamou without the protection of a big tree. The jaguar sometimes comes in answer to the call! The tinamou is also his favorite bird.

“One bird was nearby and soon had my arrow in his body. He fluttered his wings and kicked a few turns, but was soon with me at the base of the tree. I broke his leg and put a long streak of his blood under each of my eyes to bring good luck.

“The other bird for some reason came slowly. My call didn’t seem to please him, though I thought it was the same as his. Finally, but very cautiously, turning back and forth, he came within range and had my arrow in his side. By then it was getting dark and I had to hurry to get back here during daylight.”

Then Txaxo Anika, the deer hunter who had gone scouting in a different direction, spoke up.

“As I went through the forest I was watching for a place where my deer plant might grow. You know that little plant that has the spotted leaves like the sides of a young fawn. After walking awhile I found some good ones, with well-marked leaves. The best one I dug up and I chose a piece of the swollen root to chew in my mouth. Then I felt good and knew I was sure to find a deer.

"After walking around for some time the root in my mouth was all going to tiny bits and going away and still there was no sign of deer—though I was being careful not to miss any indication. Finally I came to a hillside where the wind of a storm had blown down a large tree. In the open space left by the fallen tree young plants were coming up with fresh green leaves. I stopped at the edge of this opening and saw the leaves of a young plant vibrating on the other side. I watched, I listened, I tested the air but could detect no sign of the animal I knew must be there.

"Very carefully I moved toward the plant, which was now motionless. When I got there I found that some of the leaves on the plant had been chewed, and on the soft ground beside it was a perfectly shaped deer track. But the animal had sensed my approach and left before I could see it. However, there are ways, if you know them and have time, to make a runaway deer come back. I very carefully worked my hand into the soft earth under the deer track without disturbing it and lifted it whole out of the earth. Then I turned it over and placed it upside down in the hole where it had been. At the same time I spat out the chewed-up root of the deer plant, and I returned to the place where I had entered the opening—being very careful not to disturb anything or make a sound.

"There I could see the spot where I had turned the deer track upside down. I squatted down in a position I could shoot my bow from, and waited. To break the shape and hide my face I put a small leafy

branch in my mouth and I almost closed my eyes. The smallest sign will make a shy deer go away, but I knew this one was still hungry and would be back. He didn't come quickly. I had to be patient and say his name, 'txaxo, txaxo, txaxo,' over and over to myself. Finally I heard a very slight sneeze and knew he was clearing his nose and trying to smell me. But I had rubbed myself with herbs before going out and he couldn't sense me that way. I knew from the sneeze that he was very close, and I was ready. In a moment, without making another sound or moving a leaf, my friend was standing over his upside-down track ready to take another bite of leaves. His side was toward me. All I had to do was pull my bow string back hard and release the arrow. It struck him just behind the shoulder. He went straight up in the air and fell back quivering where he had been standing. A few kicks, a few eye flutters and mouth movements and it was over. I came straight back with him to arrive before darkness. I think we will find all the game in this place that we can carry back to the village. Tomorrow I am going after a band of wild pigs whose trail I saw."

Natakoa then told how he had heard a band of monkeys going through the tops of the trees, out of sight. By giving the call of a baby monkey fallen to the ground he stopped them and brought the band down to his arrow range to shoot two. One had fallen to the ground dead, but the other held on by his tail up in the trees. He had to go up a vine to bring this one down.

After this recital of the hunting stories was fin-

ished, the men listened to the sounds of the night jungle and explained them to me. Their hearing was much more acute than mine. Much of what they described I could not hear. This was true also of my sense of smell. Gradually we drifted off to sleep, all except the one assigned to tend the smoking fire and the turning of the meat on the smoke rack. Sleep was never continuous in a hunting camp—men were up and down and the fire watch changed several times.

The man on guard, I learned, was also expected continually to be aware of the sights, sounds, smells of the surrounding jungle as the guard changed during the night hours. Animal activity at night is often more intense than during daylight hours in the tropical forest.

As I was settling down to sleep I went over in my mind everything that had happened on the hunting expedition so far. I realized that I had learned more about the forest in these few days out with the Indians than during all my previous experience. I was also well aware that by comparison my knowledge was extremely limited and the acuity of my senses far below that of my companions. This I was determined to change.

The next day Nixi and I went off with Txaxo Anika to look for his band of wild pigs. One man was left in camp and the other two were to go to the tree with ripening fruit. There they would build covered hunting platforms up in the tree crown. These would make it easy to take the large birds and monkeys that came to eat the fruit.

Single file we went through the forest undergrowth, with me in the middle. Immediately my bodily coordination and sense perceptions were taxed to the utmost to keep up with the pace set and remain alert to the jungle signs I was learning to recognize. We came to the place where Txaxo had observed the trail of the wild pigs and we stopped briefly for consultation to decide what to do next. Before we moved off opposite to the direction the band of pigs had taken I was given additional hunting information.

They explained that in hunting a large band of pigs the timing of approach and an understanding of the animal signals were the major factors in the success of bagging these animals. The two principal signals of this species were imitated and explained to me. At a certain type of grunt from the leader, the band would break into a wild run and scatter in all directions. At a loud clicking of the teeth and a high-pitched squeal, the whole band would immediately bristle and attack any moving object that was not part of the band. To protect oneself in the hunt and obtain meat it was necessary to anticipate and recognize these signals.

We went off again at a killing pace that required all my attention. It seemed we went at this fast speed for a long time and exhaustion was beginning to show on me, when we came to fresh tracks and stopped to look, sniff the air and discuss the signs. The odor I now associated with wild pig was strong here. Tracks and disturbance of the earth gave my

companions considerable information—the approximate size of the band, what they were eating, how fast they were traveling and in what direction.

This time we set off at an angle to what appeared to me to be the traveling direction of the pigs. After going up over a hill and down into a small valley with no sign of game, my companions came abreast and strung their bows with arrows. I did the same without sensing any reason why. Suddenly with a loud grunt there were wild pigs all around us, running and squealing in utter confusion. I managed to shoot one arrow and get strung up for another shot when I realized that as suddenly as the pigs had appeared they had gone without a sound. I looked around and my hunting companions were gone also.

My quarry was nearby, gasping his last breath and kicking feebly with my arrow in his side. Soon Txaxo and Nixi came back, each with two pigs and each with a daub of blood on both cheeks. This was another good-luck charm for future hunts, and they insisted that I daub blood on my own cheeks from the animal I had killed and that I also rub some on my new bow.

My first kill with a bow and arrow gave me a feeling of satisfaction. Nixi and Txaxo both showed their pleasure at my accomplishment. We immediately made vine slings and started back to camp with loads on our backs. On the way the animals were gutted, but only one at a stop in order to leave the least evidence at any one location in case a possible enemy might wander by.

We were back at the hunting camp by noon. After a bath in the nearby creek and food, we prepared the fresh meat for the smoking rack, cutting it into long thin strips. The Indian who had stayed in camp had, in our absence, woven one large carrying basket out of branches and vines and had started preparing back pads. This he did by pounding the inner bark of a certain tree to make it soft and flexible.

The others came back from building the treetop hunting blinds in the fruit tree. They brought with them two large birds, curassows. During the exchange of hunting experiences for the morning, they told us that several large flocks of birds had come to eat while they were building the blinds, but they had been able to shoot only two because their preparations had been incomplete, and the birds had flown away. It was agreed that we would all hunt birds the next day at the fruit tree.

Txaxo told all the details of our chase after the band of wild pigs. In the process he explained all he knew about the feeding and habits of these animals.

“A band of white-lipped pigs has an old sow for a leader,” he said. “They fan out behind her but no one goes in front of her. She leads them on a circuit around their territory. They come back to the same place in their travels about every two or three moon changes.

“If you can approach the head of a band of pigs undetected and kill the leader the rest wander around completely disorganized until a new leader takes over and begins to give signals. At this time of confusion

you can kill many pigs. They don't know what to do.

"If you are lucky enough to take the leader of the band and know the secret, you will always have meat. What you do is cut off the head of the old sow and dig a deep hole in the ground. Then you place the head very carefully in the bottom of the hole facing opposite to the direction they were traveling. You then tamp the earth in well around the head and fill up the hole to make the ground look just as it was before. If you do not put the head in deep enough the pigs will dig it up.

"If you do all of this with reverent chants to the spirits of the forest, the band of pigs from which you have taken the leader will, as long as it exists, continue to pass this location on every circuit of its territory. To have the meat you need regularly all you have to do is study the habits of this band and be ready, hiding in a blind when they pass. You can always kill two or three if you are quick with the bow and arrow. But don't try to kill the leader again."

With dusk came the call of a *yungururu* close at hand. This one of the partridges awakens and calls out at intervals during the night. The hauntingly plaintive call of several limpid notes seems to come from nowhere. It is repeated only at long intervals, and to identify the direction of the source is almost impossible by sound alone. If you have scouted the area, know the sleeping habitat, have observed droppings and can correlate all the jungle signs, intuition tells where to find the bird. Raci had done all these things, but he waited for the night and the

bird to settle in before he went out to get his quarry. After the call was repeated an hour or so later and then again after a similar period, he left camp in a direction opposite to that from which the call seemed to be coming. A bird spear was in his hand. He soon came back with another bird for the smoking rack.

As Raci was telling us the details of finding the yungururu a sound new to me came from the nearby forest and all conversation stopped. The sound was repeated several times before there was any comment. It seemed to me to be a singing insect of some kind, but I was sure I had not heard it before. The sound appeared to come from a different direction each time. As near as it can be reproduced in letters it sounded like "wyetee, wyetee, wyetee tee." My companions explained that this was one of their best talismans for finding game, but to capture one took extreme patience and the best of luck. No one made a move for a long time, but talked about where the call was coming from. It was repeated occasionally as we listened: "wyetee, wyetee tee, wyetee, wyetee tee."

"I saw the bush he likes to live on over there," said Nixi, "but others are down near the stream."

"He is not always on the bush he prefers to eat," came a reminder from Raci, which further confused the search.

Finally after quietly discussing all the alternatives, two men slipped silently into the forest in opposite directions. Watching from the shelter, we could barely see them moving as they slipped with

the utmost caution into the undergrowth. The call was not repeated for a long interval. The slightest disturbance near the insect would shut off the call for a long time, so this one must have been upset. After what seemed like half the night, at last, "tee," then "wyetee tee" was hesitantly repeated. Not a sound from the hunters, nor any other discernible sign. Another long, long wait, then a stronger call—confidence—then another, repeated several times.

Hours of this, and the insect was finally found hanging on the underside of a leaf, feeding on his favorite bush. He was brought to camp wrapped in the leaf, cupped in the hands of his captor. The others set about immediately making a small cage of woven twigs and fibers. Finally the camp settled down to sleep in a mood of great satisfaction over the possession of wyetee tee, a small inoffensive insect, the greatest game-finding charm an Indian hunter could have.

The next morning before sunup we went to the fruit tree and I was told about the preparations for the day. Up in the top of the tree were three small cages, each one just big enough for one man with an upright bow. These were completely covered with leaves except for a horizontal slot through which a man could see part of the tree crown and through which he could shoot his arrows. The cages were placed so that, combined, the whole tree crown was within range of at least one hunter, but also in such a position that a hunter would not shoot his companions.

Just before sunrise three men took their positions in their treetop houses, with two of us on the ground to gather up the birds or monkeys that fell when shot. We were also alert for the arrival of ground-dwelling animals that might come to eat fallen fruit. This might include agoutis, peccaries, tapirs, land turtles and others, even the jaguar.

The action started soon after sunrise and continued until late afternoon. This was a caimito tree in full fruit, the favorite food of large game birds and many animals. My companions in the treetops were astute enough to allow the first arrivals of the birds that came in groups to send out calls of their fruit discovery before sending them to the ground with arrows. It was also difficult to distinguish the true bird calls from the Indian imitations.

As a bird fell to the ground one of us immediately picked it up, extracted the arrow and attached the arrow to a vine by which it was returned to the tree-top for reuse.

It was a day of action and when it was over we had all the birds the five of us could carry back to camp. My friends reminded me with glee that we had captured a wyetee tee! We were long into the night preparing our day's take for the smoking rack.

The next day we decided to build another smoking rack and shelter because of the amount of game we had. It was also necessary to prepare additional packing baskets for the trip back home. Three men went to the fruit tree and three stayed in camp working. Mid-afternoon two men came back from the bird

tree with a few choice birds and word that Raci had gone off elsewhere to hunt when the action slowed down too much for him.

After dark Raci came in with two small animals and a very disturbed look on his face. He told us that at dusk he had heard the call of a lonesome partridge and had answered it while finding a good place to wait.

“We called back and forth for a long time, and the call seemed to come from different directions. There may have been more than one, but within my memory I cannot recall failing to bring my bird to shooting range. I might not always get him, but I always at least see him.

“This time I saw nothing and turned back at dark, but something was wrong. I am not sure just what.”

Nixi broke in, “We are not the only ones in this forest who know how to imitate calls of birds and animals. You should have recognized this and broken off calling sooner. You may have given a clue of our presence to an enemy, perhaps even the Guacamayos.”

This created a stir in camp, the tension running through the group like an electric shock.

Nixi took command. “Prepare everything to break camp. At first daylight we start back. Screen the smoking fires so they cannot be seen. We will fill the carrying baskets in the morning from the smoking racks, but put the cured meat in now. The fresh will go on top.”

The camp turned into a beehive of mumbling, scurrying men. As preparations were finished we went to our hammocks, but no one slept much from the mumbling and whispering that went on.

In the middle of the night everyone was aroused by a wailing, echoing call that no one could identify. It was not repeated, but there was no more rest in camp. Packs were prepared and adjusted. The shelters were taken apart and the pieces scattered, the fires extinguished.

At the first faint break in the darkness we departed in pairs, going in different directions, to meet later at an agreed-upon hilltop. So we hoped to confuse any possible followers. I went with Nixi, and we met the others after sunrise as planned. Without comment we formed a single line and set out at a killing pace which we held to without let-up except for momentary stops to adjust the packs on our backs. At dark we stopped, exhausted. Each one made his own tiny shelter against the cold dew drip, and then rested or slept fitfully, leaning against his pack.

Before daybreak we broke camp and again separated for the start of our trek. Well after dark on the second day we stumbled into the village. An immediate hubbub started. Chief Xumu was waiting for us, having anticipated our trouble and early arrival. He now sent out a message calling for the men in the more distant houses to come in.

We were relieved of our packs by the women, who brought us refreshing thick fruit mush to drink. Dis-

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cussion started as the men began to gather. My companions were commended by the chief for returning at the first sign of possible danger, as they had been instructed.

The events leading up to our return were recounted in detail and the tension mounted. Much of the discussion was still beyond my understanding, but it seemed to me that Xumu deliberately built up the tension by his comments. He seemed to challenge them. Finally it was decided to send a group back with Raci to investigate. They were instructed by the chief and outfitted to leave that same evening. After they had gone, the other men were cautioned to take extraordinary care in their hunting, to watch for and report immediately any sign of an invasion.

Several days later Raci's group came back without positive evidence, but the feeling persisted from inconclusive signs that our territory was being visited from outside. And I realized and felt the tension this produced in the whole tribe.

Meanwhile Xumu and Nixi took pains to review with me in infinite detail the subtleties and significance of every incident, every sound, sight and smell of our recent hunt, thus fixing in my mind what I had learned and increasing my knowledge and background of jungle lore.

I recall that when Nixi tried to imitate the mysterious echoing sound we had heard coming only once from the forest our last night in the hunting camp, Xumu explained that there were a very few forest sounds that could not be identified. These rarely

heard sounds came from the *yene*, a spirit source no one could explain, and these eerie sounds always caused profound uneasiness among hearers.

From these discussions and from my own daily experience in the village I became aware of how closely these Indians were molded to their environment. Their muscular coordination and visual sense of their surroundings in the forest made it possible for them to move quickly and with ease through the most tangled undergrowth. They could anticipate the hazards and difficulties and avoid most of them. They reacted to the faintest signals of sound and smell, intuitively relating them to all other conditions of the environment and then interpreting them to achieve the greatest possible capture of game. Development of the other senses compensated for the limited visibility found in the forest. Often on the ground in the forest, visibility is no more than fifteen feet or so. Looking upward into the canopy, one may see one hundred feet but seldom any farther. Most of the jungle animals have protective coloring or camouflage that make them difficult to see even close at hand.

The Indians had great patience when it was required and they used it, together with knowledge and intuition, to capture game with the least possible expenditure of energy. Many of the best hunters seemed to know by some special extra sense just where to find the game they sought, or they had developed some special method of drawing game to them. Knowing how to imitate and to use the signals

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the animals made to communicate between their kind in various situations helped in locating game and drawing it within sighting range of an astute hunter. It took skill, keen development of all the senses, patience and experience to enable a hunter to provide, constantly, sufficient game to feed a family.



Hunting Stories

HUNTING lore was passed down from father to son by demonstration in the forest, but hunting knowledge was disseminated through the tribe by means of hunting stories. Whenever a group of men were together with nothing in particular to do the conversation soon focused on an exchange of hunting information, both recent and traditional. As my ability to understand and respond became evident, they made an effort to include me in these interchanges.

One of the favorite times for telling hunting stories was around the fire in the house on a cold rainy night. Another was outside in the village clearing on a clear balmy night of the dry season. On clear nights with full moon a nightjar often repeated

its melancholy call in our clearing before going off to catch insects out of the night sky. This bird, known in Brazil as *mai da lua*—mother of the moon—was called by the Indians *nawa kano*. Its soft four-note plaintive call on a descending minor progression never failed to give the impression of utter melancholy. It would usually bring the people out to listen for the repeated calls that nearly always came before the bird flew off on its nightly mission of catching insects. They would gather to listen, and then linger on to watch the moon rising higher and higher in the clear sky. As they sat quietly on mats or animal skins, talking casually, some chance remark would remind someone of an incident and a long evening of storytelling would have begun.

The group could usually tell from which dead tree of our clearing the mother-of-the-moon was calling, and they would watch to see in which direction it flew. This, they thought, indicated where the good hunting would be the next day.

One night I remember led to the telling of a series of stories about the howler monkeys. On this particular bright moonlit night *nawa kano* flew off to the west, which brought comments from Awawa Xuko, whose hunting territory was in that direction. Awawa Xuko was named after the largest toucan, which he hunted for its bright feathers.

Awa said, "I was out that way today and did not have any great reward for my efforts. There is a fruit tree that I have been watching. It is in the territory of a large band of howler monkeys and the

last time I went by this tree, a few days ago, there were a few green fruit on the ground, picked and dropped by these monkeys. When I arrived there today I could hear the monkeys coming way off in the forest. From the sound and knowing their trail-ways through the treetops, I knew they would come this way.

"There was not time to make a proper hunting blind in the treetop, but I went up to a crotch and broke off some leafy branches to fix around me and hide my presence as well as possible. It seemed to take the howlers much too long to arrive where I was waiting.

"As the band approached within reasonable hearing distance, but still far out of sight, I realized from their calls that something was troubling them. I could hear the old males leading the pack give their sharp roaring barks that are their warning signal. These barks alert the whole group to trouble. When they came closer still I could also hear the leader making a deep, hoarse clucking sound to signal his move ahead.

"They seemed to move a few trees and then gather together. The leaders would give their warning barks and roars, then they would move on again. As they approached my fruit tree I could see them through the treetops and could tell from their actions that it was something on the ground that was bothering them. This made me very cautious and I tried to improve my cover so I could not be seen from below.

"When they were all gathered in a treetop just a few trees away there was a break in the foliage and I could see the ground. There I saw a young spotted jaguar, almost full-grown, prowling on the ground and looking up into the trees. I could tell he was following the monkeys, hoping one of the young might fall to the ground. This often happens at a careless moment. But this time the monkeys had spotted their enemy and were fighting back with all the weapons they had.

"In addition to the shouts and roars, they were breaking off dried limbs and dropping them. Also I could see them deliberately pissing and crapping on the prowling cat beneath them. When they hit the mark there would be a furious, snarling growl from below. This would be answered by a loud roar from the treetops.

"As they came nearer to my tree I could see that they were traveling with great caution, and this was the reason it took them so long to reach me. The fruit was ripe and when the first of the band entered my tree they gave the signal for feeding, but they were very nervous and unsettled by what was on the ground below.

"I knew if I shot a monkey the jaguar would get it when it fell, so I sat still and watched below. It was quite open beneath this tree and I could see a fairly large area of ground. The jaguar was trying to stay under cover to avoid the debris flung from the treetops, but I could tell where he was. He was spitting mad from the insulting treatment from above.

“While I was watching, I noticed the attention of the jaguar change to something on the ground out of sight in the bushes. I looked and I saw a giant anteater come ambling out of the underbrush. He was nearly as big as the jaguar. Immediately the jaguar, in his youthful frustration and ignorance, confronted the anteater, who calmly sat down on his tail facing his challenger and opened his arms as if inviting an embrace.

“The jaguar circled with caution, and the anteater calmly turned in response. Finally in anger and frustration, the big cat plunged with a roar into the embrace, grabbing the anteater by the throat. At the same moment the two great forearms of the anteater, fitted with tremendous claws for pulling apart termite-infested logs, closed around the jaguar. As the exposed neck of the anteater was ripped with great teeth, the backbone and ribs of the jaguar were pulled apart by the powerful claws of the anteater. Both animals died almost instantly in each other’s embrace.

“At this commotion, a tremendous roar broke out from the band of howlers. In the excitement of watching the battle below, the branches hiding my presence fell away, and the monkeys scattered before I could get a shot at one.

“All that I obtained from this encounter were the teeth and claws of the dead jaguar, since we eat neither the meat of the jaguar nor of the anteater. This was a rare occurrence, because a grown jaguar will not attack an anteater. He respects claws superior to his own. On the way home I got a small

partridge, my only game for the day."

Awa's story led Natakoa, my recent companion at the hunting camp, to speak up. "Several days ago I was up in a blind we had prepared in a fruit tree, hoping to get birds. My son was on the ground below. Before any birds came I heard the clucking of a howler leading his group toward our tree. Howler monkey is not my favorite meat, so I was disappointed. The monkeys permit no birds in a fruit tree while they are eating there.

"This tree was a tall one and from my position I could see out over the forest. As the monkeys approached the tree a tremendous harpy eagle appeared, seemingly from nowhere. He swooped and darted in among the treetops as fast as lightning. Before the monkeys realized what had happened, the eagle had grabbed with his terrible yellow talons one of the largest males of the group. There was a roar from the others as they scattered.

"The eagle, laboring mightily over his unexpectedly heavy burden, flew to the very top of a nearby giant *lupuna* tree. There he placed the dead monkey securely in a crotch and examined it carefully. It was obviously more than he could eat by himself. He sat there looking around, raising and lowering the impressive crest of feathers on his head and neck. Then he started calling off across the treetops with that piercing whistle we sometimes imitate for an emergency call. In a few minutes two others of his kind came winging in over the treetops to help the hunter dispose of his kill.

"The howlers had disappeared, and with the eagles nearby I knew nothing would come to our fruit tree, so we departed to look for game somewhere else."

As Natakoa finished his story everyone turned in anticipation toward Xumu. He gave a slight smile, and a sigh of pleasure went through the crowd. They knew what was coming but I did not.

With deliberate calm, the old chief started his story. "When I was a young man and my people lived in the forest many days' travel off to the north of here, we had as chief a wise old man called Awawa Toto (Great Leader). He tried to teach me everything he knew about the forest and I wanted to learn.

"One day Toto said that we should go off in the forest for several days—there was a special band of howlers that he wanted to show me. We prepared our gear and smoked meat carefully and departed from our village early one morning toward the place of the setting sun.

"While traveling we did not talk, but when we stopped to rest or to observe something special he would tell me about the howlers. On the way we saw several small bands of these monkeys. Toto would call my attention to their actions and teach me to understand their signals. These I have taught to you, as Natakoa and Awa have shown in their stories.

"The howlers are not as fast as the other monkeys, but they are better organized and smarter than the others. As you know, a small or medium-sized band

is usually led by a small group of old males. A large band of fifty or more is very rare, but such a group is always led by one powerful male with a group of other large ones under him.

"Toto was looking for a large band to show me how it worked. He was a wise old man who knew the ways of the forest and could usually find whatever he wanted there. This time it took us several days, but finally one evening we heard rolling through the forest the great roar that could come only from the throat-sounding boxes of a great band of howler monkeys.

"We moved nearer and before they had settled down for the night found their lodging tree. Then we withdrew and prepared to wait for daylight. Toto told me that the last time he had seen this band of howlers they were led by a large white male. He was larger than all the rest, which were of the usual brown or black color. Toto explained that the white one had been seen first several years ago near our village as a young monkey with a band. The hunters had all been anxious to kill him and persecuted the band until it broke up in small groups and disappeared, along with the white one. He told me that if you kill too many of a band of howlers they become wary and all hide at the least disturbance. They will also change their feeding territory. But if you hunt them only occasionally they will continue to provide food that is usually the easiest to find in the forest because of their howling at dawn and dusk.

"Only recently had Toto found again the range

of the white howler and discovered that he now dominated a large band. Before dawn we returned to the tree we had located the night before and waited there for sunrise. With the first bluish-green light of dawn penetrating to the depths of the forest we could hear stirrings and grunts in the tree above. As the first rays of sunlight lit the treetops a loud coarse roar broke the silence and was soon joined by what seemed like a thousand others, as the roaring reverberated through the forest.

"We very carefully maneuvered into position for a better view. In the bright rays of the morning sun, seated on the large branches of the tree there was assembled a host of brown and black howlers of all sizes. In their midst, but standing apart, was a grayish white one, half again as big as the rest. All their eyes were on him. He would rise on his hind feet, draw in a breath and roar. The rest would join in and the sound would go rolling off through the forest.

"'White ghost,' whispered Toto.

"The roaring was repeated several times and then stopped. The white one made several hoarse metallic clucking sounds deep in his throat and started off through the treetops, moving from the sleeping tree to the feeding area. The others began to follow. At this point I was cramped and stood up. Toto pulled me back down but not before there was a loud bark from the treetops. Then one of the large black males came to investigate, grunting 'who! who! who!' at us. All the others were quiet. The white one had

completely disappeared.

“We pulled back under cover and stayed quiet—hardly breathing. Soon a gurgling or crackling sound was followed by the clucking call to travel, and the band was off again through the treetops. We waited until they got to the feeding trees, which Toto recognized. While they were busy eating we approachd cautiously. We could get only the briefest glimpses of the white one. He was extremely wary and cautious, staying in the densest foliage out of sight. We stayed with the band all day, and Toto estimated from their movements what their present range would be. He described this to me, and we started for home.

“Not long after our trip to see the great white howler and his tribe, Awawa Toto died. Then I had to organize and control our village. It was a long while before I had time to think again of the white one. But one day we were talking about hunting, and someone reminded me of the white ghost. We decided to see if he was still there, far off in the forest.

“I chose three men to go with me to find him. We went to the area where I had seen him with Toto and searched for several days. One night I had a dream that showed me where to look, and we went there. And one evening we heard the roaring, far away, and hurried after the sound. The band was getting ready for the night when we arrived. There was the great white howler standing in the midst of his band in the last rays of the sun. I had a sudden impulsive desire to have his white robe as a trophy.

The range was too great for an effective shot, but I brought up my bow and let fly an arrow on impulse.

“He heard the twang of my bow string during a chance moment of silence and whirled. The arrow just grazed him, and there was instant pandemonium. The white ghost disappeared into a dark mass of vines and leaves in the tip top of the giant tree crown above all the rest of the forest.

“We examined the ground below where he had been directing the chorus and found spots of blood. The forest was silent, the band of monkeys gone. But nothing had come out of the clump of vines and we thought we could hear a soft grunting. I decided to go up and investigate. It was a long hard climb and darkness was falling as I reached the lower part of the tree crown. I could see the dark mass of vines above but there was no sign of life inside. There was only one approach that would hold my weight. Near the hiding place of my prize there was a fork in the branches. As I reached for this to pull myself up, the head of a tree-climbing viper rose up with a hiss and its tongue flashed out. This, the most poisonous snake of the forest, blocked my access to the hiding place of the white ghost.

“There was no alternative but retreat and no other means of access to my prize.

“We slept under the tree and heard not a sound of the howlers during the night nor in the morning. At sunrise I went up the tree again. The last fork in the branches I approached with care. The viper was still there and I could do nothing to dislodge him

while clinging to a vertical tree limb. Retreat again was my only choice. We stayed around the tree all day and could sense no sign of our quarry. The band of howlers had disappeared without a sound. That night asleep under the tree I dreamt that it was all a fantasy.

“The next day we went sadly home, without the least sign of any of the band of howlers. And all the way back to the village I was wondering if Toto would have approved.

“Many times while we stayed in that village we went back into the deep forest but never again could we find any sign of the white ghost nor of his brown and black people. Only in my dreams did the white ghost come, now and again, to send his great deep-throated roar echoing through the forest.”

As Xumu finished his story there were small murmurings of appreciation from his listeners. We all sat on quietly for a time, then gradually men and women drifted back to their houses. Xumu sat long that night, looking into the night sky, before he went back to his house.



Invasion

OFTEN in the afternoon groups of men and boys would gather in a clear area at one side of the village. The boys would have target practice with their bows and arrows and play games. The men were there to comment on and sometimes to participate in the target practice. A small bow was a boy's first toy, and he could shoot an arrow almost as soon as he could walk.

In one of the games a dozen or so boys would form two lines facing each other, about one hundred feet apart. They would then shoot blunt arrows back and forth at one another in opposing pairs. This was training for quick action and coordination, demonstrated by picking the arrow out of the air as it went by. To let one go by without catching it was reason

for unfavorable comment. To be hit by an arrow caused universal howling and insults from every on-looker. Occasionally the men would play the game with hunting arrows—a dangerous pastime that frequently drew blood.

Target practice by the men demonstrated marvelous skill. Hitting a small target at unbelievable distances, then splitting the arrow with another one, or shooting down an arrow in flight were common demonstrations by the good shots and the goals toward which the others worked.

Shortly after our interrupted hunting expedition we were watching one of these displays when the chief came out and handed me one of our caucho rifles. This was the first time since my capture that I had seen any of our equipment, and it was a shock. The chief must have seen this, and to divert my attention he pointed at the shooting target attached to a tree trunk and with gestures indicated I should shoot at it.

I tested the action of the Winchester repeater and found a shell in the chamber. With the breach open I looked to be sure that a dauber wasp had not plugged the barrel with his mud nest, and I found it free. The gun had apparently been kept with meticulous care—there was no rust, but a heavy smell of smoke.

I levered a shell into the chamber and tested the rifle. How strange it felt now to my shoulder! During our trip from Iberia and at the caucho camp I had been proud of my marksmanship, but now . . .

The rifle felt easy in my hands. I raised the barrel and came down on the target, a small feather fastened on a distant tree trunk. This was the way Domingo, the cauchero, had taught me, and I eased down on the trigger with a steady continuous pull. There was a loud report, exploding in our unaccustomed ears, and the feather flew into a puff of tiny bits and pieces.

The sound was too much for my companions, especially the children, who went screaming toward the houses. But they stopped halfway and looked back and, hesitantly, returned. Some of the men went to look where the target had disappeared. Others wanted to touch the gun, which I handed back to the chief.

At this point a pair of squawking blue and red macaws flew over at one hundred feet or so. I was to find later that this bird was the symbol of the tribe's worst enemy. One of the hunters pulled back and let fly with an arrow. There was a gasp from the crowd as a gyrating bird spiraled to the ground. A few minutes later I noticed a hawk come soaring over the jungle. He picked up a hot-air current from our sun-heated clearing and went up it in a turning circle away from us, but soon came back around. The chief saw me watching the hawk and handed me the rifle. As the hawk came swinging back at an impossible range for bow and arrow, I put up the rifle, leading the hawk a bit with my aim to compensate for his speed, and eased down on the trigger. This time it was the hawk that exploded in a cloud of

feathers, and the crowd went wild. My reputation as a marksman was made. And every one of the men had to look at the gun and touch it with awe.

It was shortly after this that unmistakable signs of an encroachment on the tribal hunting territory were reported to the chief by returning hunters. This caused a great change in the mood of the tribe. The women didn't want to go work in the plantations at a distance from the village where the crops needed their attention. The children were apprehensive and quiet, moping around without purpose. And the hunters were unsuccessful.

Drastic action was called for, and the chief sent out several small scouting parties to find the source of invasion. He told one party where he thought they would find the interlopers.

In a few days this group was back with a report and the village went into a frenzy. A small camp of two houses had been found three days away from our village, just where the chief had expected it. He immediately dispatched another small group to spy and check on the daily habits of the trespassers.

The other men he called into a series of daily meetings where each head of a family group was reminded of past losses to his family by attacks from outside. Each was told by Xumu of his responsibility to avenge both the family and tribal integrity. Plenty of opportunity was given the men to boast of all the great and terrible things they would do to the enemy. Tension and pressure grew. By the time the scouting party was back the tension seemed to

be approaching a stage of violent reaction.

After the detailed report on our enemy's daily routine was heard, plans for a raid were begun by the chief. The invaders were only a small party of eight, including men, women and children, but they undoubtedly were backed up by a larger group farther away. Any sign of weakness now on our part would surely lead to deeper and stronger encroachment.

The chief carefully picked fifteen men, including me, as the nucleus of the raiding party, with ten more men to act as vanguard and rear guard. Then serious preparations and consultations started. Fighting equipment was assembled, inspected by Xumu and put in order if anything was found defective. Included in this outlay were two Winchester repeating rifles from the caucho camp, which I checked for my use. One was to be borne by my assigned bodyguard.

An important part of preparation for the raiding expedition was the painting of black decorations on the body—such as I had noticed on my captors at the caucho camp. The juice from the fruit of the huito tree was used, and it produced a blue-black stain that lasted for several weeks. Paint on the body consisted of various designs of wavy, jagged or broken lines alone or in combination, or spots arranged in different ways. The women were artists at applying body paint. On the face a wide band was started, covering the area between the nose and chin, and extended to each ear, tapering to a point

at the ear. In addition various narrow lines and small dots were used to embellish the basic design. It gave the face an awesome appearance when seen unexpectedly at close range but had a camouflaging effect viewed from a distance.

Our preparations ended with a ceremony that put us all in a fighting frenzy. We sat around a large circle, and as a small clay pot was passed around each dipped his forefinger into the mixture in the pot and then licked his finger. From the taste, the basic ingredient of this liquid preparation was tobacco, but there were other ingredients I did not know.

The effect, after a few rounds, was heightened nervous agitation and tension. Talk of battle and of what would be done to our present annoyers prevailed. And when an individual could stand the tension no longer he would jump to the middle of the circle to give a loud wild demonstration of what he would do to any enemy that came within his reach. The fervor and frenzy were contagious—working back and forth around the circle. And the displays of individual violent aggressiveness were awesome.

Late in the afternoon when the chief could hold them no longer, we prepared to depart. A rendezvous in the forest away from the village was fixed, and we left by twos and threes in different directions to confuse any possible observer. Several hours later we gathered in the depth of the forest, after much imitation birdcalling back and forth. Here we waited for the dawn, and then very cautiously set out. Our

pause for the night had given me time to think and wonder why I had been thrown into a feud between Indian tribes. From our preparations it was clear, of course, that the Huni Kui (now including myself) were defending their home territory from encroachment.

We were spread out, with me and two bodyguards and carriers in the center. There were right and left flankers along with the vanguard and rear guard. Each group had its agreed-upon vocabulary of the forest animal and birdcalls. These were used sparingly, however, to avoid confusion among us and possible detection by an enemy.

Nothing happened that first day, but in the late afternoon of the second day as we approached the general area of the enemy camp, there was a ringing shout in front of us and then complete silence again.

With even greater caution than before we moved up in the direction of the call. There we found the front guard grouped around a prostrate body with an arrow sticking out, front and back, of his chest. He was not one of us; he was from the nearby enemy camp. One of our men had come on him but was discovered in time for the warning shout we had heard before he could be silenced.

The shout was cause for some anxiety among us, since we did not know who, besides ourselves, might have heard it. After a long discussion we decided to move into position around the nearby camp, ready for a predawn attack. Signals for the night and for the attack were decided on and we moved stealthily

into position in the falling darkness.

It was a terrible night of tension, waiting for calls to interpret and trying to anticipate what might happen. I had nearly dozed off when I was nudged by a companion at the first blue-green light of dawn penetrating the forest.

The signal had come to move to the edge of the clearing to await the final call for attack, which was to be the hoot of an owl repeated in a certain rhythmic sequence. The hooting came a few minutes later and brought a wild shouting, screaming rush from the jungle into the small clearing. But what an anticlimax! The two houses were empty and in the dim light of dawn we realized that the strangled call of the previous afternoon had been heard and the camp immediately evacuated. We picked up a few abandoned artifacts and set fire to the palm-thatched houses. My rifle had not even been fired!

After a brief consultation a party was sent to examine the nearby forest for signs of the inhabitants, and we agreed on a point to meet in the afternoon, on the way home. Then we went our separate ways, in small groups, to the rendezvous. The main reason for extreme caution was now over, and the return trip was more relaxed than the moving out. However, I learned that in the forest one must never be off guard.

The following morning, after sleeping together in the forest, we were met with a shower of arrows as we broke camp. No one could be seen in the forest undergrowth; the arrows had been sent flying at a sound target, not a sighted one, and no one was hit.

But a shout went up, and, since I had a rifle in my hands, I discharged the magazine of shots in rapid succession, firing in the direction from which the arrows had come. My companions had never heard such a display of sound. When they had recovered from their surprise and admiration for this exhibit of fireworks, a party was sent to search for the attackers, but nothing was found.

That evening when we entered the village and reported to the chief, an *oma*, a victory celebration, started and continued for two days and nights. A good supply of fermented drink was on hand, made by the women in large pots and buried in the ground. With the strongest, which had sugar-cane juice added, it was possible to get violently drunk.

The *oma* began with a chant about battle and domination of enemies, growing in animation as it progressed. Soon a snake dance developed, the men and women linking their arms together at the elbows and forming a long line. They weaved in and out around the village behind a leader with a feather-tipped baton. The chant alternated between leader and his followers. With a change in the chant, the women formed an inner circle with the men outside. The dancing continued in this way, with the chants alternating now between the men and the women. Rattles of large seeds hollowed out and attached to leg bands accentuated the rhythm of the chants and the stomping feet. This continued, with only brief intervals of slowdown, until everyone was exhausted and the tension built up by the raid had completely worn off.



Apprenticeship

AFTER THE RAID, since the enemy invading our territory had apparently withdrawn, life in the village settled down. Although the routine of daily life still seemed strange to me, it was a known pattern for the Indians. The tension was gone; the women went back to work in their little cleared and planted plots in the forest; the men again took up organized hunting. The chief kept a close watch over all these activities, giving the necessary directions to keep things moving according to his wishes and plans.

My own position had noticeably improved after I took part in the defense of the village against the invasion threat. And my ability to shoot the rifle without flinching from the awesome noise of thunder

exploding when I pulled the trigger gave me a special status among the Indians, to whom the rifle was a strange and awesome thing.

I soon found that the chief's program for my training was far from finished. He prepared now a series of combined herbal purges, baths and diet that had subtle effects on my feelings and bodily functions. I cooperated without hesitation now, since the recent events made me sure that I was in a secure position within the tribe. Before my life among these Indians had begun I had heard the usual rumors of Indian medicine and witch-doctor activities. There had always been a certain fascination in this for me, so now I was determined to observe and learn all that I could.

After several days of preparation in which every detail was closely supervised by old Xumu, we began a series of incredible sessions with the extract of the vision vine, nixi honi xuma.

A small shelter was built especially for the two of us at a spot slightly removed from the village. It was just within the edge of the forest that surrounded our small settlement. There was only room to swing two hammocks with a small fire between. Outside there was also a small clear space in which to swing hammocks among the trees. Here we were well guarded from intrusion of any kind. Food was brought only on signal from the chief and always by the same old woman. Sounds from the village did not reach us.

The chief and I went to this secluded site alone

one morning. On the way I remember wondering how old this man might be. Actually, his physical features did not give the usual signs of age. His skin was not unusually wrinkled and the flesh did not sag on his bones. Nevertheless, he gave the impression of being ancient, and it was evident that reverence and admiration dominated the feelings of the tribe toward their headman. He maintained a calm, distant aloofness from the people and their activities, yet gave the feeling of complete awareness of present, past and future events. And one felt that their awe of him was justified.

He led the way toward the forest at his usual slow, deliberate walk, which also gave the impression of great age. He seemed to choose each step with care. On the way he started a low chant, seemingly to himself:

Spirits of the forest
revealed to us by honi xuma
bring us knowledge of the realm
assist in the guidance of our people
give us the stealth of the boa
penetrating sight of the hawk and the owl
acute hearing of the deer
brute endurance of the tapir
grace and strength of the jaguar
knowledge and tranquillity of the moon
kindred spirits, guide our way

It was a clear, still day of the early dry season. A few isolated cotton puffs of clouds drifted in an azure sky as we stepped from the village clearing in-

to the mottled shade of the cool forest. Preparations had been made for our arrival, but no one was present. The old man sounded a birdcall that was answered from somewhere out of sight.

I looked around. A tiny, newly kindled fire glowed in the center of a small opening in the forest under-growth. Beside it was a bunch of the leaves used for the fragrant ceremonial smoke. The small clearing revealed the massive buttresses to the columns that supported the leafy roof of the forest a hundred feet above our heads. These columns, draped in vines and hanging plants, were also visible in the diffuse filtered light that was occasionally broken by a brilliant shaft of direct sunlight. Details otherwise unnoticed would stand out momentarily in vivid clarity in these illuminating shafts of light from above.

At a motion from the chief, I sat down comfortably in a hammock swung low outside the shelter. Chanting, the old man deliberately put a bunch of leaves on the fire. Billowing clouds of fragrant smoke filled the still air.

O most powerful spirit
of the bush with the fragrant leaves
we are here again to seek wisdom
give us tranquillity and guidance
to understand the mysteries of the forest
the knowledge of our ancestors

We savored the fragrant tranquillity of the scene as the smoke drifted around us and up into the vaulted structure of the forest. Every immediate

sound and movement seemed suspended by the magic smoke. Before the enchanted spell drifted away with the smoke, Xumu poured a single large gourd cupful of honi xuma from a pot and began another low chant:

Phantom revealing spirit of the vine
we seek your guidance now
to translate the past into the future
to understand every detail of our milieu
to improve our life
reveal the secrets that we need

He came over to me and said: "You drink alone this time. I will be present to guide you. All is well. Your preparations have been completed. Every reaction is favorable. Drink it all at once, without hurry and without fear, and prepare for visions. Pleasant and profound visions will come to you."

He took back the empty cup, calmly sat down opposite me in the other hammock and said, "The diets and purges have prepared you well. No unpleasant reactions will appear this time. With care, we can direct the flow of visions into desired channels. I will not leave your side. I have done this times without number. When prepared with care, it comes out well."

We both lay back in our hammocks. Imperceptibly a feeling of euphoria entered my consciousness. I heard a brief pulsating hum in one ear, which seemed to float off, up into the treetops. My eyes tried to follow it, and as my glance wandered in the

treetops I became aware of undreamed beauty in the details of the textures of leaves, stems and branches. Every leaf, as my attention settled on it, seemed to glow with a greenish golden light. Unimaginable detail of structure showed. A nearby bird song—the irregular arpeggios of the *siete cantos* (seven songs)—floated down. Exquisite and shimmering, the song was almost visible. Time seemed suspended; there was only now and now was infinite. I could separate the individual notes of the bird song and savor each in its turn. As the notes of the song were repeated, I floated in a sensation that seemed somewhere between smelling an elusive intoxicating fragrance and tasting a delicate ambrosia. A breath of cool air drifting in from the forest created an ecstasy of sensations as it cooled my exposed skin. Sensations of a pleasant aroma again seemed involved.

The chief spoke in a low, pleasant tone, "Visions begin." He had completely captured my attention with two words of magic. I instantly felt a melting away of any barrier between us; we were as one. The mere glance of an eye had infinite meaning. The slightest change of expression conveyed full intent. We had complete rapport at all levels of understanding. I knew his thought as he knew mine. Did this telepathic facility come from some primitive recess of the mind used before ancestral man communicated in formal language?

Xumu said, "From the hunting camp we find there is much of the forest that you do not see and

understand. We will change this. You must have complete knowledge of the forest to lead the men in vision ceremonies to improve their hunting. Thus they can eat well and be content." A few simple words and slight gestures transmitted the full intent of his message.

(Córdova stopped his story and explained to me at this point: "You must realize, my friend, that the deeper we go into this, both written and spoken words of formal language become less and less adequate as a medium of expression. If I could arrange it we would have a session of visions ourselves and then you would then understand. But that would take time. Meanwhile we will continue with indifferent words and inflexible modes of expression.")

The chief said, "Let us start with the birds. You know the medium-sized tinamou, the partridge that gives the plaintive call at sunset because he does not like to sleep alone on the ground. Visualize one for me there on the ground between the trees in the alternating light and shadow."

There he was! I saw him in infinite detail with his rounded tailless rump, plumage olive gray, washed and barred with shades of cinnamon, chestnut and dusky brown, colors that blended imperceptibly with the light and shadows on the leafy forest floor. My visual perception seemed unlimited. Never had I perceived visual images in such detail before.

"Yes, Chief, I see him," was my response, mentally if not aloud.

"He will move around now. Watch closely."

A few shy, furtive movements and the bird was in another pattern of light and shadow where he was much more difficult to see. But I had followed him there and could pick out every detail still. The chief then brought a female, and the male went through his mating dance. I heard all of the songs, calls and other sounds. Their variety was beyond anything I had known. Finally a simple saucer-shaped nest appeared on the ground between the birds, with two pale-blue eggs in it. The male then sat on the nest, to my surprise. "Yes, he raises the children," said the chief.

We went from the various tinamous to the trumpeter, the curassows and other important game birds, all seen in the same infinite and minute detail.

Then the chief said, "Close your eyes now and let the visions flow before we go on to other things."

I do not know how much time had passed—time had lost its meaning for me. As I closed my eyes vague traceries of light and shade developed, gradually taking on a bluish green color as the patterns changed. They seemed like living, changing arabesques, moving in rhythm over a geometric background, with infinite variety of form. Sometimes they slightly resembled familiar patterns of spider webs or butterfly wings. A moving current of air with a barely perceptible fragrance translated itself on this visual screen of my mind as a faint violet wash over the moving arabesques. A birdcall or buzz of cicada—a brilliant flash of color or a subtle rippling of waves, depending on its character.

All the senses seemed to be intensely acute and integrated into a single system. A stimulant to one was immediately translated to the others. The imagery gradually faded away, and the chief was aware of this.

He spoke, and I roused myself. It was late afternoon.

"We have night work to do," he said. "It will take another cup of honi xuma to make it effective. You will find this second cup even more illuminating. Listen for my instructions and have no fear."

He built up the smoldering fire so there was a dancing flame in the gathering dusk. Then he handed me another large cupful of the clear green liquid, which I drank without hesitation.

There was an almost immediate reaction. As the darkness deepened I became aware of an acute depth of visual perception far beyond anything known to me before. The mighty trees around us took on a deep spiritual quality of obedient benevolence that set the character of the whole scene. As the fire died back down to a glowing coal, the darkness settled over everything. At the same time my visual powers were so augmented that I could see things that in other circumstances would have been totally invisible to me. This explained how the Indians could travel with ease through the forest and even hunt at night.

A passing firefly lit up the scene with a brilliance that seemed to approach the light of day. My sense of hearing was also much more acute. I could sepa-

rate the night sounds far and near. When a cricket buzzed nearby I could see him in the dark on a stem rubbing his legs against the sound box of his body. A group of small yellow frogs up in a nearby tree started an alternating exchange of a bell-like call, "chill-ing, chill-ing," echoing back and forth with the exquisite clarity of a small silver bell. From the treetops there drifted down on a descending air current the heavy musky fragrance of a night-blooming orchid. In my state of heightened sense perception, this was almost overwhelming in its intensity and it overflowed into indescribable sensations of taste.

The call of an owl, "whooo whooo," floated on the still night air and was answered in the darkness.

"You will learn to see and hear at night as clearly as the owl," was the chief's comment. And I felt that it was true.

With chants and the calls of the various animals, the chief evoked in my visions vivid episodes in the lives of the nocturnal forest animals. The chants, the calls and the visions they brought were all to become part of my own repertory.

The morning sunlight breaking through the forest canopy awakened me from a strange sleep that I could not remember falling into. Orientation with time and space returned, but only slowly. I felt as though I were coming back from a distant journey to unknown and unremembered places.

The chief offered me a calabash of thick fruit gruel to drink, which helped my senses return to reality. We soon walked, at Xumu's usual measured,

deliberate pace, back to the village.

I was still kept on a strict diet, and it turned out that this was to be a period of intensive training for me. Once every eight days I would have a session of visions with the chief. These included examination of plants and their various uses both as food and as medicine, as well as further study of the animals. During the time between sessions I was taken often to the forest on both day and night trips with small groups of hunters. On these excursions I found to my delight that the intensified sense of perception and increased awareness of my surroundings originating in the sessions with the chief stayed with me. In the forest my companions would point out origins of sound and smell and continually test my progress in becoming completely one with the forest environment.

After each series of four sessions with the chief eight days apart, I would have an equivalent period to work with and absorb the new experience and knowledge. A strict diet was still kept up, and then another series of vision sessions would begin. At times during all this, which went on for months, I became nervous, high-strung and afraid of going insane. The chief and the old women noticed this. They took pains to explain and reassure me that as long as I followed the diets and instructions everything would come out well.

During my training I became aware of subtle changes in my mental process and modes of thought. I noticed a mental acceleration and a certain clair-

voyance in anticipating events and the reactions of the tribe. By focusing my attention on a single individual I could divine his reactions and purposes and anticipate what he would do or what he planned to do. This was all important to the way Xumu governed the tribe, and I began to see what lay under the surface in his management of their community life. The old man said my power to anticipate and know future events would improve and grow, also that I would be able to locate and identify objects from a great distance. All this, he told me, would help protect and control the tribe.

As the training process went on I began to sense a vague feeling of urgency on the part of the chief to impart his fund of knowledge and experience to me adequately. In actuality, I believe you could say that he was transmitting the accumulated tribal knowledge of, perhaps, centuries. The tribe could stand no rivalries in the chieftainship and it became clear that I was being prepared.

During the rest period between the vision sessions, in addition to going out with the hunters, Xumu himself often took me on short excursions to the nearby forest. There he would take great pains to show me and to explain the use of the plants, many of which we also saw in the visions. He would explain to me the secrets of their preparation for use and repeat the chants that should accompany both preparation and application. It was strongly believed among them that the chants helped in bringing about the desired effect of the treatment.



Indian Caicho

SEVERAL weeks after my last session of visions, we were watching the boys shoot arrows at one another in the open area beside the village. It was a pleasant, cool afternoon. A group of young men were batting a cornhusk ball back and forth, trying to keep the ball from touching the ground. The game broke up and they started target practice with bow and arrow.

It had been several months since our raid on the invaders, and firearms had not been seen nor mentioned. Now Xumu asked me to demonstrate the rifle again and sent one of the men to get one. My first shot demolished a small target on a distant tree. Some of the men showed less reluctance toward the gun than before, and the chief encouraged one or

two to handle it, which they did with considerable awe. Then Xumu turned and asked me if they could learn to shoot it.

Now all eyes were upon me; no one breathed. I felt somehow that this was a crucial turn of events. Deliberately, calmly, I answered, "Yes, but it will use up many bullets. We might need this ammunition to defend ourselves against invaders if they come back."

The rifle changed hands carefully among the group, but there was no more comment, and with dusk coming on everyone drifted back toward the houses. I was walking slowly along beside the chief. After some moments of silence he paused and turned toward me. "Could you not get for us more guns and more bullets?"

A bomb burst in my brain and for a moment I could not control the racing chains of thought—buy guns, where, with what? I was careful to let none of these disturbing questions show on my face, and after a brief pause I answered slowly, "Well, it depends on producing caucho rubber to trade."

"Can you not train a group of men to make caucho?"

And my answer, a simple "Yes, I can, if they will follow my instructions."

We went on slowly toward the houses. My mind was seething with the implications of this exchange. Uppermost was a feeling that I might after all have some power over my future, which I had not had in all my time with the Huni Kui. I had simply gone

along from day to day, blotting out the future. Now perhaps I could have some influence on that future. There might be alternatives. Dangers, too, but risks mean little to a seventeen-year-old.

The next day the chief brought the matter up again. "To produce caucho, tools are needed. What are they?"

"Good sharp axes and machetes," I answered.

"We have some, but the people do not know how to use them."

"Show them to me," I said.

Xumu ordered all the axes and machetes brought to him. The tribe still used Stone Age axes and did not know that a steel ax must have a sharp edge to cut effectively. The few axes they brought out had the cutting edges worn down to the kind of blunt edge found on their stone axes. The machetes were largely fragments, except for a few which I thought probably came from the raid on our caucho camp on the Jurua and which the chief had kept, unused.

We found a piece of sandstone that would do for a grinding stone, and I began to sharpen one of the axes to show the sharp tapering edge the tools must have. The chief ordered the men to sharpen the axes and the machetes my way. I asked him to tell all the hunters to locate the caucho trees in their territories, so we would know where to begin.

In a few days the equipment was ready—the axes, machetes, and some heavy wooden mallets made to my specifications. Meanwhile the hunters had located many caucho trees in the forest surrounding the

village. Now the chief picked a group of men to learn how to cut caucho.

I was not an experienced cauchero, but I knew how it was done. It was mostly hard, tedious work and I wondered how the Indians would take to it. As for me, the new enterprise gave a new meaning to life and I was inwardly greatly excited. I knew this must not show and I think it did not, although Xumu was undoubtedly aware of how I felt.

The caucho tree, one of the large forest trees, has a smooth gray bark filled with the milky latex which forms rubber. It is not easy to extract the latex. First all of the large surface roots of the tree must be traced along the ground and the underbrush cleared around them. Then small saucer-shaped depressions are dug with a machete at three-foot intervals along the roots, and these are lined with green leaves.

While other men are building a pole and vine platform around the main trunk of the tree above the low-butressed roots, the ground roots are tapped. This is done by taking a machete and heavy wooden mallet and cutting inch-wide grooves in the bark at intervals along the root so that the latex will flow into one of the leaf-lined depressions.

When the platform around the trunk is finished the axemen start felling the tree. This is done in such a way as to leave the bottom of the tree trunk resting on the stump, forming a triangle with stump and ground. Thus the trunk is up off the ground and may easily be tapped. This kind of tree-felling con-

trol is not easy to develop. Once the tree is felled, excavations to receive the latex are made at intervals beneath the trunk and are lined with leaves. When these are ready, rings are cut in the bark around the trunk just above each depression in the ground. All of this must be done in one day, because the latex flows most freely just after a tree is felled. Two trained caucheros can finish the work on a tree a day, but we were far from this.

In the leaf-lined depressions the latex collects and the moisture drains into the ground from the naturally coagulating latex, so that in three days the chunks can be gathered. These are then put in a crude press near the next tree to be worked. When the press, made of four rough slabs of wood and a primitive lever, is closed, fresh latex is poured on the rubber chunks to hold it all together in a compact block. These blocks are made the size a man can carry on his back.

What a mess we had at the beginning! Teaching the men the various tasks involved was complicated by the fact that they alternated the caucho producing with hunting. Even the most willing of them could not be kept at this kind of hard sustained work day after day; it was too different from their usual way of life. However, they were eager to learn when I told them about some of the things I could buy for them when the rubber was ready.

With their good muscular coordination the men learned quickly to use the sharp axes and machetes and to cut into the bark without going too deeply.

However, a great many caucho trees were felled improperly before they learned the skill needed to get one to fall exactly right. After the first group of Indians were relatively good at the caucho-cutting I had them teaching other Indians and before long had a good rotating labor force. There was no labor shortage, for the chief assigned the men to work just as he appointed hunting areas and agricultural plots. At any rate, it was many weeks before we had twenty blocks of rubber weighing nearly half a ton altogether.

Xumu determined that this number of blocks—one-man loads—would be best for the first trip to the trading post. Any discussion of the trading post was always vague. I was unable to find out anything about how far away it was or in which direction.

When the rubber blocks were ready, the chief began to pick the men for the trip. Each packer was assigned his block of caucho and set about preparing his pack harness and back pad for it. The chief made a careful selection, choosing the strongest and most reliable men. By this time I knew the men fairly well myself from working so closely with them in producing the caucho, and I was pleased at his selection.

My own equipment consisted of one of the rifles, a machete and a small back pack containing a rolled-up pair of pants and a shirt which the chief dug up from his store of captured goods from past raids. When I tried this outfit on, the Indians looking on laughed and poked one another. I felt strange, too, and the clothes were not a very good fit. They would

get me by, though—I could hardly go into a trading post naked.

In a few days we were off through the trackless forest, moving toward the northeast. This was completely unfamiliar territory to me, and I still had no idea where we were going. It was obvious though that the Indians were heading for a specific location.

For several days we traveled overland in the same general direction, without crossing any major streams. One day at mid-afternoon we came to a large stream. I wondered what its name was, and my companions told me they called it Hono-Diri-Ra, river with rapids. This did not help me in trying to locate myself.

Beside this river we stopped and made a camp of sorts. Nixi was the leader and I found out he knew that the blocks of rubber would float. While we were busy making camps, he sent scouts out ahead along the riverbank. They came back during the night and reported all clear. In the morning we tied the blocks of rubber together with vines and made two small rafts of logs from the riverbank forest. The men worked at this eagerly, for it meant relief from the tedious packing of a heavy load.

Scouts and hunters went out ahead on foot, and we launched our flotilla of rafts, all tied together. We could control navigation somewhat with long rafting poles which we pushed against the river bottom, but this was mainly to keep us in the main current. We were content to float downstream at the river's speed. After several days, we began to travel

on the river only at night. The rafts were hidden and we rested during the day while the scouts were out.

As we floated downriver there was time for me to consider the situations and problems I might run into at an unknown trading post where I would be a stranger. I thought it unlikely the Indians were taking me to a place that would provide easy means of escape. Actually, escape was not foremost in my thinking at this time. I was for the moment purposefully occupied with the Indians, learning much of their jungle medicine, and, as I think back on it, I was perhaps under the thought control of the old man through the trances. At least he felt confident enough in me to send us off to a trading post. No doubt my companions had instructions to see that I had minimum exposure to the outside world.

One day we pulled our flotilla up onto the riverbank and separated the caucho blocks, which we put out on the riverbank to dry. The rafts were broken up and the logs scattered. I noticed that the Indians were edgy, and I thought we must be coming to the end of our journey. We camped here and the men assembled their packs again. At dawn the following morning we were off through the forest. Late that night we came to a stop again on the riverbank, and the men started threading the rubber blocks on a long vine.

Off in the distance I thought I heard a dog bark. In the light of a descending moon and the first streaks of dawn, the men drew around for a conference. Nixi was spokesman, since he had worked most

with me. I distinctly heard a cock crow off down the river. I was sure then what this gathering was all about.

Nixi said, "We have tied all the blocks loosely together and put them in the water. There is also a three-log raft, big enough for one man. If you go down along the bank and avoid the deep water you will come to a Brazilian trading post around the next point. It is small, two or three houses, only a few people. Take the caucho down and trade it for guns. Be back here not later than sunset, sooner if possible. We will have the village surrounded. In case of serious emergency, signal us with the whistle of the eagle that we have taught you, and we will come. We outnumber those in the village two to one, and the men there are few. We have studied the place well."

I put on the pants and shirt from my pack. They felt incredibly strange on my body. Nixi gave me a long rafting pole, and he and a couple of the others held the log raft while I climbed onto it. With the pole I gently pushed the raft into the shallow water, and the string of blocks on the vine rope followed.

Now I had time to think of what I would say at the trading post. I tried to remember the few words of Portuguese I had learned when I had come through Brazil with my Peruvian companions; that was at least two years ago now. I had lost track of time, except as the Indians marked its passage. It seemed it would be a good strategy to talk as little as possible, in spite of my curiosity about many things.

As I came around the point the sun was just coming up over the horizon. There in a cove was the small village on the riverbank just as Nixi had told me. It was merely a small clearing with a group of several small palm-thatched houses. Smoke was rising out of the roof of two. On the bank a man was drawing water with a bucket. He looked up and saw me, then rushed up to one of the houses with his bucket of water.

By the time he was back I was tying up my raft at the canoe landing.

“*Bom dia,*” he called as he approached.

“*Bom dia,*” I responded.

“Caucho for sale?” he asked.

“Yes.”

“Where from?”

“Upriver.”

“You can trade it here—no need to go farther down.”

“Good. You have rifles?”

“Just got a shipment in.”

“Winchester?”

“Yes, of course!”

I began to pull up the string of rubber blocks to tie it securely.

“Well-made blocks,” he said, “must be nearly a ton. I will send a man down to help you bring them up to the scales.”

It took the two of us until mid-morning to carry all the blocks up to a deposit where the weighing scale stood. Then, with the trader, we started weighing each block. I tested the beam scales for balance

before we started, and the trader noticed this.

“What price?” I asked. From his reply and my memory it seemed the price had gone up since I had entered the forest on the Rio Jurua.

It was nearly noon before we finished weighing. I had to fend off a thousand questions with a one-word reply—where my caucho camp was, how many people, all Peruvians, etc. I was anxious for the tally and to start making my purchases. We went into the store and I checked the tally—over a thousand pounds.

First I bought a box of rifles and had to check each of the six it contained, then two shotguns and a big load of ammunition, ten axes, twenty machetes, new pants and shirt, mirrors, knives and beads.

Lunch was brought in by a middle-aged Brazilian woman, and I thought of my mother. How was she? Did she consider me dead?

We ate Brazilian bean stew, *feijoada completa*, a complete meal with farina to mix with the rice, beans and meat. All this was followed by sweet black coffee. The food tasted good, and it reminded me of my past.

As we ate there were a thousand more questions.

“When would I be back with more caucho?”

“Soon.”

“Seen any Indians?”

“A few.”

“Any trouble with them?”

“No.”

“Well, be careful, they are notorious around here.”

"So . . ."

I noticed by a marked calendar that it was June 15, 1910. Then I had been gone over two and a half years. I had a thousand questions of my own I wanted to ask, but didn't because of the complications that might develop. However, it came out in conversation without my having to ask that the trading post was on the Purus River near the border between Peru and Brazil, and the trader was Antonio Rodrigues.

It was the middle of the afternoon before I could get everything tallied up. I asked, "You interested in more caucho if it comes out on the river above here?"

"Of course, any time."

There was a considerable balance of money after my purchases and I was not sure how to handle it. Money had no use where I was going, but I thought I might be able to leave a deposit here as the men did at the trading posts I knew in Peru.

Finally Rodrigues himself suggested it. "Look, if you are coming back, I can open up a book for you and hold your balance for future purchases. What's your name for the account book?"

He wrote down the balance, and I signed it in a halting, unpracticed hand.

"Can your man take me around the point upriver with my purchases, in a canoe?"

"But of course, if that's what you want."

Another hour to load the canoe and shove off. It was close to sundown when I finally arrived back where I had started from in the morning. There was

not a whisper nor the slightest evidence of my companions, but I heard a familiar birdcall and knew they were there.

The Brazilian and I unloaded the canoe, and as the man turned the point returning downriver to the village, the Indians swarmed out around me, and there was a rush to get my load out of sight and to get moving before we could be discovered or followed.

I had been careful to have things packaged in convenient-sized loads for back packing. Of course the packs going back were small and light in relation to the rubber blocks that had been packed out. Soon we were ready, and as we melted into the forest I felt tension go out of me. I removed shirt and pants and belonged to the forest again.

As we moved through the forest I became increasingly aware of distress in my stomach. When we stopped at midnight I was in trouble with diarrhea. For over two years I had eaten nothing seasoned with salt and felt that this and the unaccustomed food must have caused my upset. My companions were immediately suspicious of poison, but I assured them there was no reason to be.

In the morning they prepared an herbal concoction for me to drink, and it helped my distress. We went on, but I was weak. After my system cleared completely of salt and my food was again limited to smoked meat and fruit from the forest, my condition improved.

Going back, we stayed away from the river. It

took us ten days at a forced pace, but we did not travel at night. On this trip I made an effort to observe natural features of the forest and terrain. I was sure this would not be the only trip we would be making over this route. From my companions' talk, I sensed that the general route had been scouted out in advance of our trip.

On the last day our pace picked up, and one of our party went on in advance to advise the chief of our arrival. As we entered the clearing there was a shout from the assembled villagers, a shout that we answered. The chief came directly to me for the greeting, and the whole tribe gathered around us. Xumu ordered the pack loads put in front of us in the large circle of onlookers. The new guns were unpacked first and there was a gasp from the crowd at the sight of them.

The chief made a speech. "These will defend us from our enemies," he said. "You have seen what happens when they speak with the voice of thunder. We will dominate the forest and live without fear. You know who obtained these things for us." The Indians shouted as he put his hand on my shoulder. "We can get more if they are needed. Other things can be obtained with caucho. Let me show you." He opened the packages.

Next were the axes and machetes, which were unwrapped. The chief told the crowd, "With these we will produce more caucho to buy more guns, and these tools will make it easier to clear our plantations."

Another shout of approval went up from the crowd.

Then the knickknacks were opened up—mirrors, beads, fishhooks and other small items. The women screamed with delight at sight of the varicolored beads. But the real sensation came when the men and women both realized they could see themselves in the dozen small mirrors I had brought.

Everything was community property and all was passed around for inspection. Finally it all came back to Xumu for his final disposal of the items among the various houses of the village.

Our return was cause for a big celebration, and body painting got under way in preparation. The use of the mirrors to inspect and modify the facial decorations soon became an exciting diversion. In addition to the broad band of black painted from one ear across the mouth to the other ear, intricate combinations of small dots and fine lines were used to decorate the rest of the face. A great deal of care was taken to produce an original design, and the effects were often striking. Of course the whole expanse of the body provided space for additional artistic effort. With various combinations of red and black colors and design motifs of large and small dots, wavy and zigzag lines and various geometric forms, a great variety of effects was produced. The painting was done with great care, and the men and women were proud of the impact of the final over-all effect.

In addition, the women wore wide necklaces and

armbands of beads and animal teeth. The men wore headbands of flaring, brightly colored feathers that gave an effect of wearing a brilliant crown. The men also often placed bright feathers in their perforated earlobes, nose septum and lower lip. Some also wore feathered arm and leg bands. When the tribe was assembled, fully decorated, for a celebration, they filled the village with a gay, strikingly colorful menagerie.

Large jars of fermented beverages had been prepared by the women in our absence; large piles of fire wood were ready. At sundown several small fires were started to light the dancing area between the houses.

Chief Xumu appeared from his house dressed in his ceremonial shirt decorated with brilliant feathers woven into the cotton fabric. In one hand he had the dance leader's baton—a whisk of feathers and coarse animal hair on a string, tied to one end of a short stick. He gave orders for the women to pass around gourd cups of fermented drink. The men tied strings of rattles around their ankles, and soon the chants started.

The actual dancing began in a casual way after the chanting had been in process for some time. At a signal from Xumu the men and women formed in a line, alternating men and women, joining arms. At the beginning the chief led the line in a slow chanting snake dance, but as the pace and animation picked up he handed the baton to a younger man.

The tribe had a large and varied repertory of

chants. The dance itself changed in tempo with the mood of the chant, but there was little variety in the dance. At times the men and women would form separate lines with hooked elbows and dance in opposition or form two concentric circles, moving and changing direction on signal from the leader.

Every two or three hours there would be a pause to cool off and the drinks would be passed around again. By morning some showed the effects of alcoholic intoxication, but the drinking and the dancing went on. Disorders among the men began to show up by the afternoon of the next day. These were drunken brawls or pushing contests which the chief stepped in to settle before serious bodily damage was done. He received instant response and respect, even from the drunkest and most disorderly of the participants.

I found out later that the chief used these dances and drinking bouts to relieve harmlessly the aggressions and tensions of personal and interfamily rivalries. Xumu took care to see that differences were settled to the apparent satisfaction of all who were concerned. His word on any settlement was final. If some latent rivalry or misunderstanding remained, it had to wait for the next dance. No fighting or disorder among the men was permitted during the routine daily life of the tribe, even though personal conflicts and differences did develop. The chief had the means and the power to eliminate those few that could not control themselves and conform, and the tribe realized this. A demonstration of his con-

trol had been provided the day I was brought to the village by my captors when the old woman went into a frenzy of rage and tried to club me. I still wondered why.

After two days and nights of dancing, there was a day of rest. Then the village went back to the usual routine of food gathering from the forest, hunting and gardening. Use of the new axes and machetes made the preparation and tending of the family garden plots much easier than when there had been only stone tools. I had to show them how to sharpen and use these tools and insist that they be kept in good condition. Grinding stones were brought from rock deposits I had seen along the river on our trip to sell the first lot of rubber.

In addition to hunting, it was the work of the men to clear patches in the forest for new planting areas each year. This was done in the dry season so the brush that was gathered up could dry and be burned. These operations were all done at the direction of the chief so as to be properly timed. The burning and the planting had to be done at the very end of the dry season, just before the rains started, for best results. Xumu was an excellent weather prophet. He would announce the beginning and end of the dry season within a few days of its occurrence.

I vividly remember the people sitting around Xumu in the village clearing under the clear dry-season night sky, with the brilliant stars shining on a black velvet backdrop. The tribe had many complicated legends and myths about the stars and their

meaning, but I cannot now, after these many years, recall them in any detail.

The moon, they believed, was a man's head in the sky. It got there this way. A man named Yobo, a sorcerer, argued with the others until they were furious. One grabbed his ax and cut off Yobo's head. The body fell to the ground and the head went rolling down the trail.

The people dug a hole and buried both the body and the head, but the head found a way out and rolled after them. They were surprised and ran home and closed their houses. A great sky-blue buzzard flew down and took the head up into the sky, and it shouted back, "Goodbye my people. I am going up into the sky."

Up there high in the heavens the buzzard tore out the eyes and they became stars. The blood that spilled out became the colors in the rainbow. And the head now is the shining moon.

The stars became many. Some formed the outline of the body of *txaxo* the deer, others *xoko* the alligator. And now if you look closely you can see many shapes in the sky made by the stars.

The village was located along the crest of a series of hills, and the horizon off across the forest was visible in clear weather. The chief used the progress of the sun and moon in relation to the horizon to judge the approximate beginning and ending of each dry season. The behavior of the vegetation and the animals was carefully observed for clues to more specific timing of climatic events of each season.

I remember especially one dark night during a long tedious rainy spell that had made outside work difficult, the chief predicted the beginning of the dry season within days. This made everyone happy, but the joy was short-lived. The call of a night bird brought an immediate wave of consternation. Around first one house and then another in the village sounded the ominous call of "chieu, chieu, chieu." This I found out was the call of a small unseen night bird of ill omen. The call, if it persisted, was a sure sign of death in the village. The only recourse was to build many fires outside and burn hot peppers. The stinging fumes might drive the unwelcome visitor away.

Now there was a scramble to build fires around each house and soon acrid smoke was billowing up. However, the small bird was persistent. He seemed to avoid the smoke, and his piercing call was heard again and again. Gloom settled down over the village and remained, even after the offending, ominous cry finally faded into the night.

Not many days later, the "chieu, chieu" forgotten, a group of men were building hunting blinds in a tall fruit tree in the forest. The beginning of the dry season was always a time of intense hunting activity because many fruit trees ripened at this time and attracted birds and animals.

For some unexplained reason a young man working on the construction in the treetop slipped and fell a hundred feet to the ground. He died before his companions could reach his side. When word came

back to the village there was a profound reaction of sadness.

The body was brought back and placed in a sitting position on a small bench set against a tree. Huito extract was prepared, and men and women of the whole village painted their bodies black, with strange designs on their faces. The family of the dead man, chanting a pathetic dirge and wailing, led the tribe to the sitting figure. There, wailing and weeping, they knelt and touched their foreheads to the ground before the silent figure.

Soon a large burial urn was brought and the body was placed inside, together with all of the young hunter's personal possessions. A top was securely fastened, and the urn was buried deep in the ground near the village, with great lamenting and mournful chanting.

This death was not an event quickly forgotten, especially within the young hunter's family. The mother and brothers, each time they had occasion to recall the departed one, would go to the grave, sighing and making personal requests almost as though they considered him to be off on a trip, soon to return. Others would also come and make requests, then all together they would return to the village, talking about him and remembering events of his life.

Food plants were started around the grave and were well tended by the family, to supply his fancied needs. Only little by little was the bereavement forgotten, as the happenings of daily life obscured the memory.

If the death were not an accident, such as this one, but occurred from illness, it was believed that it had been caused by witchcraft. In that case the body was cremated with special chants to disperse the evil spirits before the ashes and remains of the bones were buried.



Legends

ON RARE occasions Xumu could be prevailed upon to tell stories. The mood of the tribe had to be relaxed and the atmosphere calm; then, sometimes, subtle and cautious promptings might be successful. I remember sitting one evening with a large group, all of us comfortable on woven mats or skins, admiring the clear dry-season night. We were discussing the stars and the probable beginning of the coming rainy season.

The talk drifted to less immediate things and the old chief was led into telling tribal history. This was an old story all of the villagers knew well, and there was a sigh of pleasure as he began:

In the dim and ancient past beyond recall, when man could still talk with the animals, our people

had many villages and lived in peace with abundance of everything. They lacked nothing and lived in happiness on the sandy shore of the great river where the water meets the sky.

One day there came a great storm, worse than ever before. It rained day and night. Everything stopped and the people went to their houses. Thunder and lightning came with a terrible wind, destroying the houses.

The sky broke and fell down. The earth went up into the sky. Everything died except some crabs in a hole. No other life remained. The land became sky; the sky, land. Then the sky returned to its place and took the spirits of the dead with it up into the sky. There the spirits lived happily, but on the earth there was nothing but a few crabs.

Then after a long time, one day the lightning opened up a crack in the sky and a woman fell out on the land. But she was killed by the fall. A crab living in a hole nearby came out and found the woman. With a knife he opened up her stomach and found twins, a boy and a girl.

The crab raised them and he called the boy Xaka (crab), the girl Maxi (good). They had a family which grew and grew and became the Huni Kui again. The animals came from the sky again, too, but man found he could not talk with the animals any more.

People did not die then as we do now. The spirit just turned into a new body. Old men changed to boys, old women into girls. No darkness existed, and troublemakers like the wasps, stinging ants, mos-

quitoes, biting flies were found only on a small island in the center of the great river.

Xaka had many sons, one named Poka. He in turn had a son, Mana, along with many others. Now Mana found life too much all the same, and he went to the boa, who gave him a butterfly. A small alligator went to the island far out in the water and brought him a wasp, a mosquito and a fly. The spider gave him a small flask with darkness inside. This Mana opened up and that is when the night began.

It took the people a long time to understand the darkness. They were afraid and they complained to Poka. Then he called Mana and asked him why he had caused the terrible thing—the darkness.

Mana became troubled, then he became angry. "I will show the people how to understand it," he shouted.

Poka was very old then and Mana, because of the trouble over the darkness, asked his father when he would die.

The old man said, "Bring me poison and I will die now."

Mana went to the forest and found a small poisonous toad which he took to his father. Poka swallowed the toad without washing it. He became violently ill and at sunset called his son and said, "You have killed me. I am going to die and go up into the sky. As I go I will call back instructions as to how you should continue life."

That night the old man died. In the morning it began to thunder and the wind came up as Poka

went up into the sky. He kept calling back, "Change—change your skin," until he was gone. But with the thunder and wind they heard him wrong and thought he said, "Stay—stay where you are."

They heard it wrong and it was a terrible mistake. The snakes understood well, also the spider, the wood tick, the locust and the pau mulato tree. These all change their skin and never die.

Our people did not die before this. They lived in happiness with no trouble or pain until the argument over the darkness. When the old man died from poison they heard him wrong. If they had heard him right as did some of the animals, we would not have had to die. We could change our skins—like the snakes. But now it is too late. Our bodies get tired with old skin and we die. If we could change our skin, pain would not bother us and we could go on living as we liked. It was a terrible mistake when they heard wrong and sealed the fate of us all.

The first of our own people was Harucun. When he was born it was not far from the great water that touches the sky. There on the bank of the rough sea he was born—born and lived there.

After him, Apo, the Angry One, was born—born and they lived together.

The First, Harucun, was called Tiwa—that was his name; Apo, the Angry One, was called Xano, and that was his name. And they lived together.

Tiwa, the First, took a woman and lived with his woman. Xano lived without a woman with Tiwa, but later Tiwa lived alone with his woman. They pro-

LEGENDS

duced our people. Xano, the Angry One, produced the others.

Tiwa, the First, when he was growing up, liked the jacy palm nuts. And Xano preferred the seeds of the xabo, the uricury palm. Tiwa liked his people, kept them together and lived with them, made large clearings and planted crops which they enjoyed, and they lived together.

Their crops grew. They lived and ate well there, and good villages were constructed where they lived.

Xano did the same with his people. They made their own clearing for themselves and planted crops, built houses. Thus the Angry One lived with his people.

Tiwa, the First, with his people built their villages well, not far from the great rough water, and there on the sandy shore lived in happiness.

Tiwa's woman was very beautiful. And one day Xano came and took her. Tiwa said he would kill him for this. Xano, mean and angry, armed himself with his lance, bow and arrows and his club.

Tiwa was at home seated and eating when the Angry One returned and entered. He said, "Tiwa, your woman is very beautiful and I like her. Why do you threaten to kill me?"

Tiwa replied, "You live with your people without a woman. Among your people there are many many women. They abound there. You take none of your women. Why? To be free? Why do you come and take my woman? For adventure? Among your people women are abundant, but you are not mar-

ried, so you want my woman for adventure. You took my woman, so I will come and take all the women from your people."

Xano, the Angry One, went into a rage and shouted, "I will kill you!" In his rage he wanted to kill Tiwa the First.

Tiwa ran for his bow and arrows, but Xano shot twice and hit Tiwa in the heart. Thus Tiwa could not shoot, but he shouted as he fell. Then Xano, the Mean and Angry One, with his club finished Tiwa the First.

Tiwa's people had gone to work. But his wife became frightened. She shouted and shouted. Her people heard the shouts and were upset.

Xano became frightened and ran away.

Tiwa was stretched out dead.

His people began to come.

His woman stood all alone and cried.

They asked, "Who killed him and went away? How did it happen?"

She said, "Xano took me. Tiwa threatened to kill him. Xano went and got his weapons and returned, killed Tiwa and left."

Tiwa's people were grieved; the women cried; the little children cried; everyone shed tears.

The men got together and said, "Let us go kill Xano. Without provocation he killed our great chief. In return we will all get together and kill him. Let us go."

This they did, all armed, together. They went. The women stayed guarding the village. The men

went. All together they went.

Xano gathered his people, armed them and waited for the others to come. Tiwa's people were very many; Xano's not so many. Tiwa's men were strong; they were not frightened; well armed they went. Many, many they went, shouting and shouting—shouting and shooting arrows. Then they fought and fought, Tiwa's men against Xano's men. Some were wounded; some died; some were not hurt. The fight thus ended and they returned home, Tiwa's men, to have a dance after battle.

Xano's people did the same.

Tiwa was dead, and his people lay out his body in his house. They battled with grief in their hearts.

The king vulture came as a messenger from the sky. With a basket on his back he took the soul of Harukun, our ancestor, to the dwelling place of spirits in the sky. The sky thundered the entire day. As the soul went into the sky, the thunder sounded time after time.

Now the people buried Tiwa's body and it disintegrated. His people came together and decided to leave this place. They migrated up the rivers. With grief they fought and then they migrated.

If Xano had not killed Tiwa without excuse, there where our people were born we could still be living happily in our good villages, there by the great rough water that touches the sky. But Tiwa was killed. We fought with grief and courage and were scattered up many rivers. And so our ancestors came to the river Honowa-ia.

And Xano's people went up other rivers.

And Tiwa's people all speak the same language, from many rivers.

From the other rivers, Xano's people now speak another language.

That is the story of what happened when our great chief was killed. If Xano, the Angry One, had not killed him, we could still be living happily in our villages beside the great sea, where the water touches the sky.

Xumu then added, "From our villages on the river Honowa-ia we came to live here in the forest many years ago. There, our people were killed and children carried away by the rubber cutters that invaded our river. The Ixabo and Xabo people came earlier. We found them here in the forest and came to join them. Now we are all one, the Donowan."

Then came another story at a hint from the attentive audience:

Long ago in the time of our ancestors when they were only just beginning to understand the uses of honi, there was a man named Macari.

He said to his people, "Friends, I am going to drink the extract of the vine honi to see the souls of my departed ancestors." Thus spoke Macari to his people.

This man had a woman; her name was Maxina. Now Macari went to the forest, cut pieces of the honi vine and brought them to his house. Maxina

mashed the pieces of vine and put them in a large vessel with water and put it over the fire. She let it boil and then she took it off to cool.

When the honi was cool, Macari took a big drink and filled himself. Then his people became frightened and went to hide. Soon Macari's drinking so big caught up with him and he broke out in a running sweat. He stamped and stamped his foot, then, trembling, stood still.

Now the effect of the drink comes on Macari and the visions begin.

He runs around from side to side in a phantom house and there he sees many strange things.

The big boa he sees. A monstrous alligator tries to eat him. Then many many big boas come out and he sees them all.

Now the spirits of his ancestors he sees. The spirits are coming and Macari shouts and shouts. The spirits of his people see Macari. They want to take him to their house. Macari does not want to go. The spirits push him, but still he does not want to go. Macari runs; the people throw their clubs. They want to thrash him; they try to thrash him. Macari sees too many of them in the house of the phantoms. Now he is running from side to side in the phantom house. And then outside he is running down a phantom trail, shouting, shouting all the way.

On the trail, there is a great lupuna tree with a tall trunk and many branches, huge branches. This large lupuna in the trail Macari sees and climbs. Now the giant lupuna with many many large limbs

holds the man standing in its crown. He shouts and shouts.

Macari shouting and shouting is heard by many of the spirits and all the spirits come. They sit on the branches, shouting and shouting at the man. Macari is not afraid of the spirits now. He has all the clubs of his people and he thinks he can kill the spirits if he wants to. The spirits become afraid and scatter when our man Macari threatens them. In the top of the big lupuna tree the spirits run on the branches from one side to the other.

Now the visions change. Macari sees a giant coata monkey shouting and shouting as it comes down the trail. It sees Macari up in the tree and wants to kill him. The man standing in the branches jumps from one to the other. The coata sees him and wants to catch him, but Macari jumps and swings a club, trying to hit the coata. The coata hits his hand and knocks away the club.

Now a large scorpion shows up and wants to eat the coata, who shouts and runs around. The scorpion tries to grab the coata but only pulls out some fur.

The large lupuna tree is the home of the scorpion, and now he sees Macari. "Man, why do you stomp around here and disturb me? I will eat you." But Macari pushes the scorpion, who tries to grab a branch but fails. The scorpion falls clear to the ground, breaks his head and dies.

Maxina, the man's wife, was very lonely for Macari and cried the entire night. In the morning

she goes to look for him and finds him sitting on a branch and singing, high up in the large lupuna tree. He is still drunk, so she goes home and tells his people.

Macari thinks of home and comes down. He goes shouting and shouting along the trail. His people hear him coming and close up the house. Macari comes near, stands there, shouts and shouts.

He is still drunk and sees strange things. He runs around the house. His people are very suspicious. His woman looks out. He calls her, "Maxina," he calls. She is afraid and does not answer.

He is still too drunk. The big boas come back and all try to bite him. Macari runs again and climbs the big lupuna. There he is shouting and shouting, with all the spirits scattered around.

There are many spirits scattered around. They want to enchant him. They sing and sing and want to catch him. In the top of the large lupuna among the phantom branches, the calls echo back and forth. One makes a beautiful hat out of new leaves of the yarina palm to decorate Macari's head.

Then the spirits take him and show him many things—their fine houses, the children and their pets, red macaws, green and yellow parrots, a young spotted jaguar, a stretched-out boa, scorpions and many snakes. They set Macari in a fine hammock and show him all these things and more.

Now they bring him foods of all kinds and he eats his fill and rests. Then they ask, "Who are you?"

The man says, "I am Macari. I am married; my

woman is Maxina," and the spirits are very pleased.

Then Macari sees colored visions. He breaks out into a running sweat again; he shouts and shouts. He finds himself hanging from a large branch up in the giant lupuna tree. He wants to come down but he cannot; he is too tired. At home his wife is crying and lonely. She eats nothing all day.

The king vulture sees this man and feels sorry for him and says, "Man, I will let you down. Climb on my back and hold on." And Macari got on between the great wings of the king vulture, largest of the forest birds. Spreading his wings, the great bird sailed out of the phantom branches of the lupuna tree and took Macari home.

His wife sees them coming and, crying with joy, she runs and throws her arms around him. She is very happy. Macari is all right again.

His people come out and ask, "What did you see on your adventures?"

He remembered and told them everything, and they were amazed. But it was a very long time before they really found out how to control the visions produced by honi xuma.

And then Xumu explained. "There were two things wrong with the way Macari took honi xuma. It was made by a woman, which is wrong, and he took it all by himself without someone to guide him. And that is very dangerous. It can ruin a man's mind if he does not know how to control the visions."



Marriage

THE FIRST initiative for a marriage usually came from the young man's family. When Natakoa, one of the best hunters of the village, and his wife, Huaini, came to the chief to discuss the selection of a girl for their eldest son, it was an event of interest to all. A marriage provided the occasion for the tribe's favorite dance celebration. Word came to Xumu in advance through one of his old women, and a meeting was arranged for a proper, unhurried discussion.

Natakoa opened the conversation, saying, "You may remember when my firstborn, a strong boy, was given his first bath and was brushed by you with the fragrant leaves that keep away the evil spirits, he did not cry out, but waved his arms and legs with

great vigor. Besides his secret name which no one utters, we called him Nawatoto, the hawk. He learned to walk sooner than most. When I gave him his first small bow and blunt arrow the pet animals around the village soon found it was wise to stay out of his range.

"As soon as he was big enough to hunt in the edge of the forest with the other small boys, he was usually a leader and never came back without something valuable from the forest. When he had the endurance to go with me into the forest, I found that he learned quickly and remembered from one hunt to the next whatever I had taught him.

"Now he has reached the age and has the experience to go into the forest alone. With his hunting and mine my family has more food than we need. I notice that at times he is restless; at night he talks in his sleep. These are signs that he now needs a wife to start a family of his own."

Xumu glanced at Huaini and she said, "He has been a vigorous busy boy and we hope you can give him a girl that will raise a good family for him. We think he is ready."

The chief then spoke to Natakoa. "Send him to your hunting territory tomorrow. In the afternoon bring him with his game and his weapons to me for an examination. We will see if he is ready to support a woman by himself. After that we can discuss it further, and then I will see which one of the young girls might make him a good wife, if he is ready."

The next afternoon Nawatoto came with his par-

ents to the chief's house. With him he brought the game that he had killed that morning, a large coata monkey and a partridge. He also brought his lance, his bow and arrows and his bamboo knife.

First Xumu looked over the weapons and commented on several minor defects that he found. Then he examined the animals. The partridge's legs were broken and the young man's face was marked with the blood, now dried and flaking off. The chief asked Nawatoto for a detailed recounting of the circumstances under which the monkey and partridge had been killed. He then went into a long interrogation of Nawatoto about the habits of each animal and others of the forest also.

There was no decision at the end of the discussion. This would come at a later meeting between the chief and the father, Natakoa. But everyone present felt satisfied that the young hunter had done well.

A day or two later Natakoa and Xumu met again, and the chief told Natakoa about the girl he was considering as a wife for Nawatoto. Natakoa was from the palm-tree people, the Xabo, and Xumu suggested a girl named Irikina, who was a member of the Donowan group, whose people had come from the Tarauaca. After talking this over, but before giving a final decision, the chief consulted with a group of older men and women of the tribe, as well as with the families on both sides. Actually when the young girls of the tribe reached marriageable age (fourteen to sixteen) they were brought to the chief for a period of training and preparation by him and

his old women. In his younger days he perhaps often had placed his offspring among the firstborn of the tribal families. He clearly controlled and arranged all marriages to his own satisfaction and the best interest of the tribe.

Finally after all the consultations and when everyone was agreed that this would be a good marriage, Xumu gave his final decision and set forth all the conditions which must be met before the marriage could take place. These preparations would take several weeks, and Xumu kept a careful watch over everything that was done.

The hunters of the tribe prepared a store of smoked game for the days of the marriage festivities, when no hunting would be done. The old women started the preparation of the large jars of strong *chicha*, adding sugar-cane juice to the boiling mixture of fruit juices. The jugs were then buried in the ground, only the necks sticking out. The mixture they let ferment for several weeks and when ready this strong liquor produced a slow but profound drunkenness when taken in large volume.

A select few of the men in the tribe had more than one woman. This came about as a special favor from the chief, and it depended on the man's ability to provide plenty of game in addition to having achieved some extraordinary accomplishment that was recognized by the tribe. A marriage festival such as this one for Nawatoto was provided for the first woman only. My own extraordinary position in the tribe was marked by the fact that Xumu had given

me three young women to take care of all my needs. There had been a traditional dance ceremony for the first; the other two girls joined my small group at the chief's instruction but without special ceremony.

Ten days before the time set for the marriage, the women prepared a large quantity of *huito* extract. Men and women both had their entire bodies painted with it and in a couple of days the skin turned blue-black. Eight days later the black skin peeled off, leaving the new skin free of blemishes. This was a good base for decorative body paint, and the painting began a couple of days before the marriage. The black *huito* was used in combination with red *achiote* to achieve spectacular results.

Xumu had sent word to all the houses, five days before the marriage day, to make the final preparations. Large baskets full of dried meat were brought in. Feather headbands, arm and leg bands, were made for the young couple. The whole village began body painting along with the making of bead strands and feather decorations during the final two days of getting ready for their favorite celebration.

The ceremony started late in the afternoon on the appointed day. At a signal from the chief, Nawatoto's and Irikina's families brought the young bride and groom before him and the assembled crowd. Xumu was dressed in a brilliant feathered robe and headdress and held a ceremonial bow and arrow in one hand. He motioned the young couple to stand in front of him and join hands. Then he gave a short lecture to them on how they should conduct their

lives. When this was concluded, Irikina brought the chief a drink from the first jug of chicha and a shout went up from the villagers. The second cup she took to her new husband, Nawatoto; then drinks were passed to everyone, and the celebration was under way.

Chanting started right away and dancing was soon added. Xumu chanted and joined in the dancing, actively engaging in the celebration until the young couple were both thoroughly intoxicated, then he went to his hammock nearby. About this time several of the old crones of the tribe loudly offered their drunken and ribald advice on how the new couple should conduct themselves off in the forest together.

Owa Iuxabo (Old Mother), with a leering grin on her face, stepped forward and shouted at Nawatoto, "When you roll that dolly on the ground under the bushes look out you don't roll on a scorpion under the leaves!"

A roar of laughter went up, and Nawakano (Mother of the Moon) offered her advice. "When your cock string becomes too tight untie it, but be careful of those big stinging ants in the dirt. One sting and you'll be in a fever!"

Other old crones added their ribaldries in like vein, amusing everyone but the young couple.

The festivities continued day and night as long as food and liquor held out, always for several days. Toward the end came the expected arguments, accusations, fights, which Xumu controlled, and after

long discussions he fixed the penalties.

Many of the arguments originated in real or imagined unsanctioned sexual freedom outside the family relationship. There was always a lot of clandestine discussion going on about this question. Xumu heard about it from his old women as soon as it got serious enough to require his attention.

When Buca (Night Hunter) thought he heard allusions to what was going on in the forest near his wife's garden when he sometimes rested during the day, he became furious but didn't let it show. One day he took his wife Bakuhua (Flower) to the stream for their daily bath. He began to accuse Bakuhua of making him the butt of too many snide remarks. Her reply was a smile that infuriated Buca. He had built a fire nearby, and now he grabbed a burning stick from it and beat her until she was covered with blisters and nearly unconscious. Then he burned off the hair that covered her forehead and disappeared. It was learned later that he went to a forest hunting camp. Meanwhile, the chief heard about Bakuhua's condition immediately and had her brought to him. He kept her nearby and treated her until her burns healed.

Buca, after several weeks when he thought the affair would have quieted down and Bakuhua's burns healed, returned from the forest with a big pack of smoked meat. Xumu was expecting him and immediately called a council of several of the older men and women. With them and the estranged couple, he went into every angle of the innuendoes and accusa-

tions. When everyone agreed that Bakuhua had been punished by fire without justification, Xumu ordered that Buca be given the treatment that he gave his wife. Then they returned to their life together like newlyweds. However, years later in a drunken brawl after some celebration, this would all come up and be worked over again. If anything new had developed in the meantime a new judgment might be made by Xumu.



Jaguars

IT WAS customary for the families to continue to provide for the young married couple, and it was not until the first child was born that regular responsibilities in the tribal life were undertaken. Then the young men went back to regular hunting, with a hunting territory being assigned to him. The wife began going out to work in her assigned plot in the village gardens.

Birth took place in the forest, with the mother being by herself or possibly assisted by another woman. If the first baby was a boy, special care was taken and the ceremonies included several herb baths prepared from leaves and tree bark. Each bath had its special chant, sung as the leaves were gathered and prepared as well as while the child was being

bathed. These chants were thought to increase the effectiveness of the treatment, designed to give the new child fearlessness, good hunting ability, physical strength and stamina.

On one occasion, I remember, Chief Xumu ordered a special treatment for a firstborn boy using the blood of a jaguar. The jaguar is the largest and most dangerous animal in the forest, and these Indians had many stories and legends of disastrous encounters with the beast. They also greatly admired its powers as a hunter, able to dominate all the other animals of the forest. This admiration accounted for the ceremonial use of its blood.

The best hunters were called together to determine where the most recent signs of the spotted jaguar had been seen, and then to decide on the best location for the hunt.

I was included in the group of six that left, well armed with bows and arrows, one morning before dawn. It was cold and dark, with a silent mist on the forest that left every leaf dripping with cold drops of dew. Now I was at home in the forest at any time. We had spent the night chanting and taking special herbal baths to eliminate all body odors that might alert our prey.

We traveled in single file off to the south of a familiar hunting area of long low hills and valleys. Just before sunrise we stopped and carefully chose our hunting ground. We needed a group of medium-sized trees with branches just above the reach of a jaguar and a large tree nearby with its crown well

above the forest canopy. The ground vegetation had to be open enough so we could see the jaguar when he arrived within range.

The men chose their vantage points in the low branches with care and cut some leafy boughs to help obscure their presence. The chosen caller was then sent up the large tree to a point in its crown above the forest. With him he took a small earthenware jug. Bird signals were arranged between the men to signal the critical stages of the hunt—no sign of the jaguar yet; signs of his coming; direction of approach; jaguar in sight. By this time it was nearly sunup and the forest was coming alive with sound and activity of the birds and animals of the day.

It was necessary for the caller to get above the forest canopy if his calls were to reach any distance. The thick leafy vegetation of the forest floor absorbs sounds from down there and they do not carry far. Soon a wavering, wailing call of a wild cat floated out over the forest from our treetop caller with his jug. This weird sound made one's spine tingle and stopped every other sound in the forest nearby. A bird trill of approval came from one of the Indians, but there was no other sound for some minutes. The call was repeated intermittently for an hour or more, and as time passed the tension built up in our bodies as we perched in the low trees.

The first signal of the approach of a jaguar was given by a group of the smallest jungle partridges. I had learned that these small birds never fly up except when a jaguar is approaching. Otherwise they

prefer to run. Now, off out of sight, we all heard the sound of the explosive take-off of a group of these birds. Birdcalls were exchanged in the trees to indicate the direction from which the cat was approaching us. In the treetop the caller changed his tone to soft grunts, and these were soon answered from a short distance away, still out of our sight. Then we heard the repeated call, "cheee, cheee," from the little chee-chee bird that is nearly always following any jaguar.

Suddenly from nowhere a tremendous spotted animal was in an open spot just below us, looking up into the trees and growling. Almost in unison the bowstrings twanged from different directions, and as soon as the arrows struck we were slithering down our trees to the ground.

Upon being hit, the jaguar jumped straight up in the air and fell back, writhing, on the ground. One Indian immediately put a vine loop around the hind feet and stretched them backward to a tree tie. Another did the same with the front feet, and a hitch went around the head to stretch out the neck. By this time the caller had come slithering down a vine from the treetops, his calling jug in one hand. The jug was then filled with blood from an incision made in the jaguar's jugular vein. A top was put on the jug, and the hunting party broke up. Two of the hunters and I rushed back to the village to deliver the jaguar blood before it had time to coagulate. The others stayed behind to remove the prized trophies of the jaguar's teeth and claws.

The villagers were anxiously awaiting us, and a shout went up when we appeared. At once the jaguar chant was begun, and the chief anointed the newborn boy with the blood of the valiant jaguar. The chief gave him the name Iria (Leader) and predicted hunting prowess and leadership ability for him in the future.

Jaguars were not abundant in our forest, but an occasional encounter kept the hunters alert to recognize the signs and be prepared. The accumulated knowledge of the tribe about the jaguar was recounted frequently around the fire at night for the education of the young men. The important tactic of an encounter was to keep the animal off balance and unready to attack. This could be done by throwing things, making unexpected sounds, dropping a piece of game and dodging out of sight. In combat on the ground the lance was the best weapon. If one could get up a tree out of reach, then the bow and arrow could be used. But it was extremely dangerous to be on the ground with a jaguar that had been wounded with an arrow.

One evening at dusk a faint wailing was heard in the distance, and the chief sent several men out from the village to investigate. Soon one of them rushed back with word that one of our hunters was dragging himself home with his body terribly ripped apart.

The chief gave a flurry of orders and there was a rush to carry them out. Various types of green herbs were gathered and were already being prepared

when the men arrived carrying the half-dead hunter, obviously mangled by a jaguar. His scalp was hanging loose, his back and shoulder were covered with terrible bleeding rips and gashes.

He was barely conscious, but was able to drink a portion of the water and ground herbs that the chief held to his lips. Then he was laid on a mat on the floor in the chief's house, and here the long job of repair and restoration began.

The chief, after carefully examining the wounds, ordered one of his old women to polish black palm thorns. With these he pinned together the gaping wounds. As this was done a poultice of crushed herbs was applied. The process took several hours, during which the victim showed but few signs of life.

I sat up all night with the chief, chanting and watching the patient for favorable signs. In the morning the chief sent out a party of the best trackers to backtrack the wounded hunter's trail and if possible learn what had happened. The hunter himself remained unconscious.

At midday the trackers came back with the body of a deer and the teeth and claws of a jaguar. The bloody trail over which the mauled hunter had dragged himself had not been difficult to follow. The men had found the deer hanging up in a small tree and, off in the bushes, the jaguar's body, killed by a deep knife gash in his shoulder that had penetrated to the heart. Going farther back in the forest, the men found signs that the jaguar had been following the hunter since he had killed the deer.

The recovery was long and painful. As he came slowly back to life, the Indians gave him a new name, Ino Doto—Jaguar Killer. When Ino was able to talk he told us this story.

“The deer I killed about sunset and started back home. On the way a large band of monkeys went by high overhead in the treetops. My attempt to stop them and call them down did not work, and I could not follow them with the deer hanging on my shoulder. So I threw a vine over a limb and pulled the deer up into a small tree. Then I tried to follow the monkeys, but they soon scattered and were lost in the treetops before I could get a shot.

“It was getting dark as I returned, disappointed, to my deer. When I came to the tree where I had pulled it up for protection, there was a movement. Too close and too late to draw an arrow to my bow, I realized that there was a large jaguar standing on his hind feet, reaching for my deer. He turned with a terrible snarling growl and came spitting at me, standing on his two back feet. As he put up one front paw on my shoulder and the claws dug in, I just barely managed to maneuver a small tree between us. Thus he was not able to bite me, but his breath was in my face and it had a hideous stink. As he reached for me with his other set of claws, I managed to free the bamboo knife on the string around my neck. I struck with this on his shoulder as he ripped my head and shoulders with his claws. Once or twice my knife went in deep and I turned it before striking again.

"With a terrible scream he broke free, taking my knife with him, and went thrashing and wailing into the bushes. Blood from my head wounds blinded my eyes, but I knew that if I was to survive I had to get back quickly to the chief for his medicine. The trip back was worse than a nightmare of pain and confusion. As my strength gave out from loss of blood I began shouting with the hope of getting help before I fell and died on the trail. If you had not heard me calling I would have died there. I knew if I could get back to the chief he would not let me die."

The jaguar slayer went through a long period of recovery. He remained a semi-invalid, and because of the damage to his shoulder and arm muscles he was never able to pull a bowstring and hunt again. Nevertheless he made himself useful around the village, and his sons helped provide game, while his wife and daughters worked to produce other food.



Assassin

THE HUNI KURI, as they called themselves, known by others as Amahuacas and many other names, were true forest dwellers. The villages that I knew were in a series of small forest clearings surrounded by a vast expanse of unbroken forest. Their primitive agriculture was adapted to small jungle clearings that were shifted to new locations as the soil became exhausted after two or three years of cultivation.

Hunting and other food-gathering activities actually resulted in their spending more of their time in the forest than in their villages and gardens. The forest in its undisturbed state there was made up, as I came gradually to see, of several distinct though partly mixed layers of vegetation. There were scat-

tered forest giants overtopping the rest of the jungle; under the tops of those great trees was a thick, dense layer of the medium to large trees. Below, there was a section of small trees and shrubs, and finally the low ground plants. The Huni Kui were perfectly at home in and gathered food in every part of this varied environment—including animals, birds, eggs, reptiles, insects, honey, leaves, flowers, fruits, tubers and roots.

With my intensive training I was soon as much at home in the forest as my captors. I could go off with my little group to gather fruit and spend the whole day or several days and nights in the forest, covering great distances and finding my way back to the village or to any other place I wanted to go, without assistance. The chief observed all this with satisfaction and I am sure said to himself, "He will stay with us always now and he will make my people a good chief."

On one occasion I was off several hours from our village with two of my young girl companions. We had separated from a small group who were cutting caucho for our next trading trip. It was time for a certain well-known *caimito* tree to be in full fruit and we expected to gather some. We had found the tree and I was up in the lower branches when a tremendous arrow struck and held in a tree limb, just at my shoulder. Immediately I swung around to the other side of the tree trunk and, with a warning shout, slid down a vine to the ground. There I grabbed my rifle and sent a couple of shots off in the

direction from which the arrow had come. There was no one to be seen in the dense vegetation.

With the shots and commotion, the rubber cutters were soon with us. The arrow was brought down and examined. It was of unknown fabrication, a type never seen by our men. Trackers were sent to investigate and the rest of us hurried back to the village. Our arrival and announcement caused a panic.

The chief called all the men together and organized several search parties to try to determine the source of this attempt to kill me. However, our best trackers were unable to find and follow any kind of track. As the days passed and the search parties returned, tension and frustration mounted. Nothing could be found, but something had to be done.

The chief then called for a tobacco talk. The women prepared shallow dishes of the liquid tobacco extract and the men gathered around. Each in turn dipped a finger in the liquid, then licked his finger. The talk built up slowly with the tobacco intoxication, under Xumu's guidance. He reminded the men that it was their obligation to protect the tribe, especially from attacks by the hated Guacamayos, who had often killed their men and carried off their women. Each man, he told them, carried a family obligation to avenge past attacks on their relatives. He then went around the group, reminding each one of specific deaths in his family history that still had not been properly and fully vindicated. Every man was implicated in some way.

Then he harangued them with a tale that revealed

to me for the first time the whole story of my presence among them.

"I am an old man. Without a strong chief you will live like animals in the forest, fighting among yourselves. Remember this is not the first time that a young man whom I have carefully prepared to be your chief after I am gone has been attacked in the forest. Recall that my only surviving son was assassinated in the forest when he was ready to be your leader. This was not so long ago and you should remember it well. My sorrow at the loss was beyond description and I have not forgotten."

An angry muttering went through the crowd, but Xumu went on. "I am an old man. My flesh and bones grow tired. I cannot change this skin. Our ancestors heard wrong and we lost the secret.

"Remember that among yourselves after my son's death we decided to bring in a young man from outside to be the chief, a young man who could get us arms for our defense, get them for us and teach our men how to use them. This has now been accomplished better than ever we expected.

"If you cannot protect him, soon you will be living like a band of pigs in the forest, led by an old sow. I do not have the time to train another chief for you.

"Last night I had a vision in my sleep. I saw the Guacamayos village off toward the setting sun. It is there the attack came from. Tomorrow I will start giving the instructions for our attack. Now go prepare yourselves and your fighting equipment."

The crowd of men broke up into small groups, each demonstrating the terrible things he would do to the enemy.

After a few days of preparation, a group was ready to make the raid on the village believed to be the home of my would-be assassin. They did not want me to go because it was so far away, and my protection would be difficult. I was eager to be a part of this raid, but it was clear that Xumu supported the leaders of the party in their veto of my name. Two of the Indians I had trained to use the rifles went in my place.

Actually, the Indians found the rifle a disappointing weapon in the forest, because of the limited visibility. The noise was useful to frighten the enemy, but if he dodged behind a tree he could escape. In a village clearing it was more effective. But for hunting the noise was a disadvantage, because it frightened and scattered the game.

We waited in the village for many days after the raiding party went out. Finally the chief said they would return on the next day. Women had been preparing large pots of fermented drink for the celebration of their return, but the general routine of the village had been totally upset, and tension was getting unbearable.

The raiding party arrived as Xuma had predicted, but the raid had been a complete failure. When they arrived at the village—they found it easily from the directions Xumu had given them—they found that it was empty. It had clearly been

abandoned some months earlier and the houses were falling down and rotting away. There had been no indication as to where the enemy had gone. The raiders could only come back.

This was a terrible letdown for everyone. Now there was no excuse for a big victory dance. The chief did consent to a drinking bout, to use up the liquor that had been fermenting. Even the women and young people participated, and the final result was an unruly mob. During the second day of drinking, long involved discussions started in which past unpleasant incidents within the tribe and between families were aired. Occurrences dating back even to the childhood of some of the older people were wrangled over as though they had happened within months. Accusations and lengthy arguments in which all participated went on for hours as the drinking continued. Sometimes things would get out of hand and the chief would have to act to calm them down. In the end, when the fermented drink was gone, the arguments were settled until the next time.

Shortly after the affair of the abortive raid, or perhaps because of it, a group went out on a raid without my knowledge. When they came back two or three weeks later, I was aware of it when smoked human flesh was being passed around among the men, and some of the women were protesting because they were not getting their share.

I knew the language well by this time and had only to listen carefully to learn that a raid had been made on a distant rubber cutter's camp. I went to

the chief with a protest of my own and told him this would bring armed bands of rubber cutters against us. They would have superior arms and organization and we could be wiped out by such a group.

Chief Xumu replied, "Our people suffered innumerable raids and atrocities at the hands of the rubber cutters when we lived on the Tarauaca River. Men were murdered, women raped and killed, children carried off. Why would they carry off our children, except to eat them?"

"You remember the old woman who wanted to kill you when you first arrived?" he asked me. "She lost her whole family in the last raid before we moved here to the center of the forest. I knew you would never be safe as long as she was alive. .

"Most of the atrocities have not been avenged in any way. The only way we can avenge ourselves for the past horrors of the loss of our children is by what these men have done. To stop it will mean waiting until all the old people who have lost part of their families are gone, or at least have forgotten. You know by now that they do not forget easily or soon."

I was in no position to argue with the chief and said no more about it.

By my improvised calendar, it had been more than a year since we had gone on our first trading trip to sell caucho. Production had continued off and on among the groups I had trained, and enough blocks for a trip had accumulated. The chief suggested that we needed more rifles, ammunition, machetes and other trade goods, so we began the preparations for

the long trip to the trading post.

The trip was much the same as the previous one except that on the river we had an encounter with a party of Bolanxos. One evening as we were bringing the rafts out of hiding under the riverbank vegetation, a warning animal call came from our guards on land. I was still on shore and I grabbed a rifle we had brought along. Soon there was violent shouting and combat. I brought the rifle into play and the surprise this gave our enemies caused them to disappear. We had killed three of them and received only light wounds ourselves.

Soon the flotilla of rafts was silently launched again for the night with everyone on board before a counterattack could occur. My men said that they were from the hooded Bolanxos and that we had been lucky, for they were violent people.

This was not a leisurely night of floating down the river. We used the poles as much as possible against the river bottom to hasten our progress and lengthen the distance between us and the enemy. In the early dawn we tied up on the opposite side of the river and took every precaution to protect ourselves. Guards were posted and scouts sent out to check the river below. As soon as they were back, in the early afternoon, with the word that the area was clear, we were off again.

At the trading post our timing and strategy were the same as before. The price of rubber had gone down. Still there was enough rubber to buy all the things we needed and to double the sum I had on

deposit. I ate nothing this time at the post and thus avoided the intestinal trouble of the first trip. My usually unresponsive companions were jubilant at the take of trade goods we made this time, and my position among them was further strengthened. When we returned to the village there was a big celebration.

Xumu was relieved at our safe return and showed it to me more than usual. He was a very reserved old man. I remember my feeling, on returning from this trip, that the old man was becoming quite frail.

Soon after our return the chief ordered the diets and purges preparatory to a vision session. It had been many months since we had participated in a group session. There were hints from the intensity of the preparations and a few overheard remarks that Xumu was planning something special.

It was a select group of twelve that went to the secluded glade in the forest. It included some of the older men and several of the best hunters. The rituals and chants were similar to previous occasions, perhaps a little more elaborate. From the preparatory chants of the fragrant smoke and evocation of the spirit of the honi xuma it was evident that Chief Xumu was attempting in this session to fix in my consciousness all the important or essential circumstances of their tribal life. There seemed to be an intense feeling of rapport among the group, all dedicated to the purpose of the old man.

I was aware of the fragile hand that poured the magic fluid and passed the cups around to each. We

drank in unison and settled into a quiet reverie of joint communion, savoring the fragrant smoke in the stillness of the silent forest. A quiet chant held our conscious thoughts together as the potion took effect. A second cup was passed to intensify the reaction.

Color visions, indefinite in form, began to evolve into immense vistas of enchanting beauty. Soon subtle but evocative chants led by the chief took control of the progression of our visions. Embellishments to both the chants and the visions came from the participants.

Soon the procession of animals began, starting with the jungle cats. Some of these I had not seen before. There was a tawny puma, several varieties of the smaller spotted ocelot, then a giant rosetta-spotted jaguar. A murmur from the assembly indicated recognition. This tremendous animal shuffled along with head hanging down, mouth open and tongue lolling out. Hideous, large teeth filled the open mouth. An instant change of demeanor to vicious alertness caused a tremor through the circle of phantom-viewers.

From a memory recess in my brain there emerged with the stimulation of the cats an experience from my past. On a trip to the Rio Putumayo a year before coming to the Jurua to cut caucho, I had come face to face on a forest path with a rare black jaguar. It had been a terrifying experience, but I had dominated the flashing eyes of the beast and we had gone our separate ways without violence.

This mighty animal now intruded on our visions and a shudder passed through us all. As before, the demon of the forest went on his way. Other animals, snakes, birds passed in review, each with some significant characteristic important to the Huni Kui in dominating the forest.

Then came scenes of combat with the hated enemy, the Guacamayos (Kana Taxi), a procession of the feared white-robed and hooded Bolanxos, and encounters with Kariwa and Kiruana, the hated invading rubber cutters. In one vision a village was in flames, the people scattering in panic into the forest. Here Xumu, then a much younger man, killed a rubber cutter in violent hand-to-hand fighting.

Scenes in the new village, where we now lived, gradually brought the visions to an end. We awoke to shafting sunlight and morning bird song penetrating both to our consciousness and to the place of our visions.

As I have explained before, it is impossible to describe satisfactorily the content and depth of feeling that captures the mind. During the visions I was aware within myself of a great feeling of empathy for these people in their struggle to dominate the forces of nature for their daily living and to defend themselves against their enemies.

A calabash of thick fruit gruel passed around by one of the guards restored our bodily sensations to the daily world of our existence, and in a subdued mood we returned to the village. Everyone seemed aware of the source of the black jaguar sequence of

visions. It left a strong impression on them and resulted in my being given the name Ino Moxo, Black Panther.

These people had a strong suspicion against the use of proper names for individuals. Everyone had a name, but it was not used, for they felt that to speak a person's real name made him vulnerable to evil spirits. Therefore, they used nicknames. Many of the men went by names of the animals they hunted or names derived from unusual incidents in their lives. The women were often addressed simply as little sister, cousin, aunt, old mother, or were given nicknames from things they did especially well.



Transition

As I began to hear an occasional, apprehensive word or remark pass among the old women who took care of Chief Xumu's daily needs, my attention was drawn to the fact that he was eating practically nothing, a mouthful or two of fruit gruel a day. Nor was he sleeping. Any time of the night I roused from sleep he would be sitting in his hammock, peering into the fire. The old women took turns sitting up with him.

He was fragile and ancient. The people showed no special emotion, but there was a feeling of constant watchfulness from those near the chief.

One afternoon I was walking with him between the houses when his left leg crumpled and he fell to the ground. The old women were there in an instant at

my shout. There was a wail and the old man shut them up with a sharp command. They carried him gently to his hammock in the house and tried to make him comfortable. Their examination of his leg showed nothing wrong below the hip, but the hip bone must have broken.

The people gathered around, grim-faced and silent. He sent them all away with a command, allowing only the old women to remain near to do what they could for him. The village, ordinarily bustling with sound and activity, settled into a gloomy quiet. That night a chieu-chieu bird flew around the house. The men halfheartedly lit fires and burned chili peppers to drive away the carrier of ill omens. The next day the chief would eat nothing and he turned his face away without response when anyone spoke to him.

In the middle of the night a mournful wail broke out when the old women became aware that Chief Xumu's spirit had departed from his earthly body. Soon the whole village took up a low, mournful chant, which continued through the night.

The next morning the men constructed a low platform just off the floor. The chief was laid out on this in the dark house. A small torch of burning tree resin was placed at one corner of the platform and the men and women whom he had led for so many many years gathered to mourn his death.

The mourning alternated between chants and stories about the life and exploits of the chief. The older men and women told stories of his fighting and

hunting abilities and incidents of his life as a young man. The arrival of the rubber cutters with firearms and their disastrous attempts to make the Indians work at rubber production formed the theme of many tales. The story of the final massacres that destroyed their villages on the Rio Tarauaca and the move of the remnants to the center of the forest, organized and led by the old man, took hours to recount. Many different men, and women too, had their individual episodes to add.

As the mourning went on, several women were preparing wide strips of thin bast fiber from the inner bark of the *envira* tree. These were hung to dry over the fire. And on the second day after Xumu died, the old women began to wrap the body. Beginning with his feet, they carefully wound these dried strips of bast fiber about his body, covering it completely. The body was then drawn high up into the smoke-filled rafters of the house. There it hung for many months, out of sight.

Village life was at a standstill for days. The men and women wandered about aimlessly, or gathered in small groups to talk. The children reflected the general feeling in the village and were quiet and subdued. The chief had managed the people in many subtle ways; awareness of his presence had been enough to keep the village operating efficiently. Now there was a terrible hole in the fabric of village life. I myself felt a great aching loss. Xumu had been like a second father to me, and now added to the pain of loss was the knowledge that the tribe ex-

pected me to fill the void he had left.

Not until the food was all gone in the village did forest gathering start, and then only gradually. The women began, first, to go to their gardens, directed by the chief's old women. They brought back bananas, peanuts, corn and yams from which gruel was made. Soon hunters were coming back again with game. Gradually, some semblance of the old village routine developed.

This was a time of confusion, a difficult time. The Indians had not yet begun to look to me for the direction the chief had given. And it turned out that they were waiting until the old man was buried before reorganizing life under a new chief.

When all the natural signs were right, the chief's old women molded and fired several large clay urns. The clay came from a nearby deposit of gray plastic earth that made excellent pots when mixed and fired. When these urns were ready, the old women lowered the body from the rafters where it had become mummified in the smoke and hot dry air. It was as stiff as a tree trunk.

With mournful chants and great reverence, the women unwrapped the mummy. With a specially prepared mixture of animal fats and palm-kernel oil, they began to rub the joints. Soon they were softened sufficiently so that they could double up the hard shriveled body into a sitting position, the knees drawn up under the chin. Then the body was placed in one of the large urns. With the body went all of Xumu's possessions—his ceremonial bow and

arrow, his dance baton, the feather-decorated shirt and many other things. Food was also placed in the urn. A second large urn was then placed over the burial urn, and the joint was sealed with melted tree resin.

Men, women and children joined in the wailing songs and the chants as the urn was carried to a deep hole, prepared at the edge of the village clearing. Here the urn was buried, and food plants were started around the grave. These were carefully tended and replanted when necessary during all the time I was with the Huni Kui in the village. Thus the departed spirit of the chief never lacked for food.

After the burial the villagers certainly did not forget Chief Xumu, but the mood of the tribe changed. There was a certain briskness in taking up the tribal activities that had been missing during the months since his death. Within a few days of the burial several of the men came to me and said it was time I led them in a vision session so their hunting skill would come back to normal. This provided a new departure, a challenge and a test.

I prepared the medicinal purges that Xumu had taught me to make and supervised the preparation of honi xuma, the vision extract. Then I prescribed and administered the purges along with the appropriate diet. When all had been properly done, we went late one afternoon to our forest glade to commune with the spirits.

On the way the traditional chants came to me naturally and thus I was able to dispel any apprehension.

hension my companions may have felt. The ceremony around the fire with the fragrant smoke went well and created the appropriate mood of calm, enchanted expectation. The potions we drank soon had the desired effect, and I found the evocative chants came easily to me and controlled the progress of the visions. The black panther appeared again and I for the first time had the feeling of actually leaving my body and being the panther. Many strange and marvelous visions passed before us, and in the morning there was a strong feeling of satisfaction among us that events would take a favorable course.

This euphoria was soon apparent in the village after we returned, and it created the impression that life would continue to flow smoothly as it had before.

It had been over a year now since we had been out to sell caucho and I was getting many requests for machetes and axes. We did not have enough of these tools to go around, but all of the people wanted them, for they made the work so much easier.

Organizing the production of caucho was a good activity to keep many men occupied. They began to work with enthusiasm, speculating on what they would get in return when the rubber went to the trading post.

It took many weeks to produce a caravan load of rubber blocks the right size and shape for back packing. When the blocks were ready I began picking the crew to go with me to the Brazilian border to trade. Also I had to organize the village to protect itself while we were gone. I left instructions with the old

women to make a good batch of fermented liquor for our return, and early one morning we were off to the north with our packs.

The trip was without special incident. I was careful to organize advance scouting to avoid any possible points of danger. When I arrived at the trading post they expressed surprise that I had been away so long. Mr. Rodrigues said the rubber price had dropped nearly in half while I had been away.

I had brought in a good lot of rubber, but with the price reduction there was little cash balance left to deposit to my account after my purchases were tallied. Rodrigues assured me that my balance with him was secure as long as I wanted to leave it.

By sunset I was back at the landing in the forest with the merchandise, and we were soon moving toward home. Two days out from the village I sent a runner ahead to announce our arrival. The celebration of our return was a wild dance that lasted two days and nights. Toward the end the long-standing feuds and conflicts began to manifest among the men. I found that my understanding of the background of these fights was not really good enough to enable me to settle them to the satisfaction of all concerned. Serious fights were stopped, nevertheless, before irreparable damage was done to community relationships. I needed more experience with the subtleties of intergroup connections and family backgrounds. It would take me a long time to develop the control that had seemed so easy when old Xumu was exercising it.

Further use of the vision-producing extract brought awareness of the complex relationships within the tribe. Observing carefully all the necessary preparations of purges and diets, I started with a select group a series of sessions in our small secluded forest clearing. These were spaced three days apart to prevent a build-up of intensity by accumulation in the system.

For the first session we had taken a strong dose to stimulate a deep and vivid reaction. With the call of a sad and eerie chant I had learned from Xumu, the visions began but the intensity kept building up as the hours passed until we were all nearly unconscious. Then I recalled a chant the chief had taught me for decreasing the intensity of reaction, and immediately the feeling of the group eased and the visions took a more desirable course.

From this experience I learned that the visions obeyed the songs and chants, or perhaps it would be better to say that by means of the chants it was possible to influence the course of the visions. To test this in a following session I chanted what I wanted to see and found that each time with greater tranquillity, no matter how involved or strange the visions, they obeyed my wishes as I expressed them in song.

Once the men realized that I had obtained domination over the visions, they all considered my position definitely superior to theirs. I developed at the same time a more acute awareness of my surroundings and of the people about me—a sense of clairvoyance

that enabled me to anticipate any difficult situation that might develop and to be alert to handle it.

Toward the end of this series of sessions, I began to form in my mind the ideas of what we should see. Expressed by means of the chants, they then appeared as desired. Once I had dominated the secret of this powerful plant, I began to examine innumerable other plants of the forest to divine their best use in our daily life.

At this time I greatly increased my knowledge and understanding of the tribal lore in methods of preparing cures from plant materials and in developing uses for these herb medicines. To do this I began taking honi alone in the forest shelter with only Old Mother, Owa Iuxabo, to guard me. As I developed new insight I was able to improve both on the preparation of these medicinal extracts and their use. This was soon recognized by the men and women of the tribe and it, too, strengthened my position in the village.

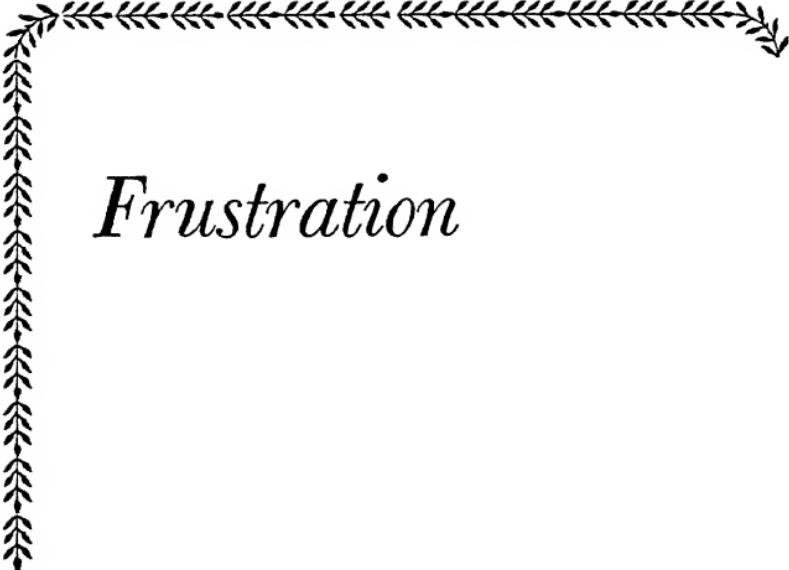
By customary preventive use of herbal preparations the Huni Kui remained a healthy and vigorous people. Sickness was unusual, but when someone in the tribe did become seriously ill everyone became preoccupied and worried until they saw him well again. Sickness, they believed, came from Iuxibo, an evil spirit, entering the body through witchcraft. A cure stronger than the offending witchcraft was required to remove the offending spirit.

"The moon, sun and stars never kill us, young or old," they told me. "Only the evil spirits have it in

their power to make us die and disappear. The gods are the heavenly bodies that illuminate us. They control the evil spirits and can send them to castigate us."

It was my part, then, when someone became ill, to dissipate the offending spirit. Chief Xumu had prepared me for this, and I adapted his method to my purpose.

The Huni Kui believed that the most powerful force coming from any live being was its breath and that words emanating from the breath were a creative force. Thus, with evocative chants and fragrant smoke from my smoking pipe filled with a mixture of tobacco and other herbs, I would create a trance-like atmosphere around the sick one. At the climax of the ceremony I would forcefully blow the fragrant smoke over the body of the patient. If symptoms of pain were present, I would by sleight-of-hand suck offending thorns from the painful areas and show them to the patient. Such intense psychological treatment with the patient in an hypnotic trance would initiate the desired cure. Herbal baths and potions taken internally would complete the treatment. By the same means, of course, it was possible for the chief to do away with undesirable elements in the tribe. In this state they could easily be poisoned or hexed.



Frustration

AS NEARLY as I can determine from the maps of today, the Huni Kui that came under my leadership controlled an area between the headwaters of the Jurua, Purus, Madre de Dios, Michagua and Inuya Rivers. Our extended village was scattered along a range of hills at the headwaters of the Rio de las Piedras, a tributary of the Madre de Dios. They named the location Xanada when they withdrew to this most isolated area away from navigable streams to avoid contact with the invading rubber cutters. From this refuge they made forays to avenge attacks that had been made on them in the past, both by rubber cutters and by other Indian tribes.

Some of the men were violent in nature and seemed to live only to fight and make trouble. It became

evident to me after Chief Xumu died that they would not be easy to manage, but it was necessary for me to do the best I could to control them.

I noticed that some of them preferred to do as they pleased and organize things among themselves. I became aware that a small group from some of the nearby houses had been absent for many days and had come back with a good load of smoked meat. One of the old women came to me with a complaint. These men, she said, had brought back cured human meat from an attack on a distant rubber cutter's camp. She said they hid it and refused to give her any. She rather slyly reminded me that I had once objected to this practice, and she intimated that if I were to control the tribe I would have to make the men follow my orders.

That same day I asked some of the old women to prepare the liquid tobacco extract and I sent out an invitation to the men for a tobacco conference the next day.

By midday the group had gathered and the shallow vessel of tobacco was placed in the center of the floor of the chief's house. As before, when this kind of discussion had occurred under Chief Xumu, the men sat in a circle and the dish passed around the circle so that each could dip a finger in the liquid and pass a few drops to his tongue. The conversation started quietly. In the calmest manner possible, displaying absolutely no emotion, I reviewed what Xumu had taught me and what I had done in getting arms and trade goods for the tribe.

Gradually the others entered into the discussion, with related and unrelated comments. After several hours of conversation I told them I was aware some were going off on distant hunting expeditions without instructions and coordination with the activities of the rest of the tribe. By means of indirect allusions to the subject I gradually made them aware that I knew the kind of game they had killed. Then I said that if they continued going out without instructions evil spirits and disastrous times would destroy the tribe.

In a long harangue I explained that if we continued killing rubber cutters, they would soon come with an expedition possessing better arms and superior organization to our own. They would seek us out and destroy our own village. The response from the men was that the rubber cutters were withdrawing from some of the areas they had previously occupied and that the tribe still lacked revenge for many attacks, murdered relatives and stolen children.

After an involved and wandering discussion, one of the old men suggested I go with a group of them on an expedition back to Honowa-ia, the far-off place from which they had come many years ago on their move into the isolated forest with Chief Xumu. By making this symbolic trek in reverse they expected me to reach an understanding of their attitude toward the rubber cutters. This seemed important to them and provided an exit from our impasse.

I knew I could not expect these people to change

quickly an attitude based on such deep emotional involvements. The expedition they proposed would provide a unifying experience for the tribe, so I consented and took the initiative in ordering the preparations and selecting the party to make the trip.

Purposely I chose a mixed group made up of some of the older men who had made the original migration, some from the two Indian groups they had joined with here to found the present tribe, and some of the young hunters born since the founding of the village. I organized and instructed a guard group which would stay behind and protect the village. The old women were told to prepare the liquor for the celebration of our return.

It took most of a week to prepare provisions for the trip—smoked meat, yucca boiled and then roasted or smoked, dry cakes made of ground corn and ground peanuts. During this time of preparation, members of the tribe, in the evening conversations around the fire, went over every detail they could remember of events that caused their migration and what took place on the trip.

At dawn on a cool morning with mist drifting among our houses at Xanada, our party of twenty-five men departed toward the north. That first day we traveled rapidly through familiar territory. In late afternoon we arrived at a place they said had been their last camp before coming to the site chosen by Xumu for their village.

Here we made camp and around the fire the men

told me that Xumu himself had come here with a small group of men to find an isolated location where they could live in peace, after he had gathered the remnants of the tribe together in the forest following a series of disastrous battles with rubber cutters. Nixi was the only one left who had come with Xumu to locate the village site. He was too old now to make our long trek and had been left behind in the village.

The next day when we came to another of their campsites we stopped early for the night, and another episode of their trip was described. Finally after several days we arrived at the place where they said Xumu had gathered them together in the forest to heal the wounded and to organize their migration. When he had found out about the raids the rubber cutters were making on the Huni Kui with firearms, killing the men and carrying off the women and children, he went alone to help them. From the forest around their destroyed villages on the Honowa-ia he gathered the stragglers who had escaped and helped the wounded. He encouraged the women and children who had lost their families and wandered alone in the forest.

While they were camped in this place, so long ago, one of the hunters came upon a tremendous boa (*donowan owapaxoni*) while hunting in the forest nearby. This was considered a sign of great good luck, because they venerated the boa. This heartened the small band of refugees and they gathered around him to sing and to dance. Then they killed the boa, eating its flesh to capture its spirit. Headbands were

made of its skin to give them continuing good luck.

The Indian refugees were from various villages of the Contanawas and Kaxinawas that had been attacked. Xumu was one of the Tuxinawas, a small group of violent people with reddish hair that had retired to the forest away from the rivers when the rubber cutters first came into the area. After the boa dance, the homeless ones decided to take for themselves the name Donowan from the boa.

It was from here that Xumu had gone out with a small band of surviving hunters to find a safe place to start a new village. They had named it Xanada, place to begin again, and had made friends with the Indians nearby, who spoke their language. Xumu with great eloquence had convinced these people—the Xabo and Ixabo, the palm-tree people—that the group of stragglers he was bringing would cause no trouble. As it turned out there was, in the beginning, plenty of trouble and misunderstanding, but Xumu had finally brought them all together as a tribe at Xanada—the boa and the palm-tree clans.

At the boa camp we made shelters and with small groups I went to visit the sites of the various villages on the River Tarauaca (Honowa-ia) that had been destroyed by the rubber cutters. They said attacks had come at dawn from the river. Large groups of attackers, all well armed with rifles, had routed the villagers, killing many of them as they fled to the forest. The Indians had no defense but flight, for the bow and arrow is no match for a repeating rifle in any cleared area. A few of the white men followed

the Indians into the forest, and they were killed by swift silent arrows. Many stories were told to me of the atrocities these caucho cutters committed.

My companions knew the locations of the garden clearings of the destroyed villages, and we went out to see these also. Each one was now grown back up to forest trees, but we were able to find signs indicating they had once been clearings. There had been in the general area several villages of rubber cutters, established after the Indians had fled. We found these nearly all abandoned now and falling apart, the clearings being taken over again by forest growth. The Indians speculated about this and questioned me. My response was vague and noncommittal. I correlated it in my own mind with the news I had heard about falling rubber prices, the last time I visited the trading post, but I said nothing of this to the Indians.

We did find one location still occupied by rubber cutters. My companions tried to persuade me to attack it and kill the hated invaders. In the end I was able to convince them that this would only bring trouble on us, while we had trouble enough from invasion by the Guacamayos and other Indians into our territory.

One night at the boa camp I had visions in my sleep of trouble back at Xanada. The next morning we broke camp and started home by forced march, and in a few days we were back at our refuge on the hills in the center of the forest. There was great rejoicing at our return, because signs had been found

again indicating that our enemies were trespassing. One of the young hunters had disappeared in the forest and had been neither seen nor heard from again.

Nixi, who had been left in charge while we were away, assured me that there was no immediate danger. No one would openly attack our village as long as we had firearms. He had put out patrols and the invaders had apparently retreated. Vigilance was necessary, but there was no reason to cancel our return celebration. Body painting soon got under way, and when that was completed the first drinks were passed around. Chanting and dancing followed.

It was a wild celebration and on the second day many fights broke out. By this time I understood better the family backgrounds, rivalries and past affronts and could settle the disputes better than before.

A few days later I began talks with Nixi and several of the older men about trying to discover where the invasion of our forest was coming from. Tension was building up in the village because the young man who had disappeared had not yet been found, nor his loss avenged. We all felt that the invasion was coming from the southeast, and several patrols were sent out in that direction. They all came back with no evidence of any target for an attack of retaliation.

To occupy their minds we started caucho production again and several months later took a good load of blocks to the trading post. The price had dropped again, and Rodrigues mentioned that rubber cutters

were leaving the forest. The caucho we brought just barely covered the things I wanted to buy. A nagging doubt entered my mind about the future of trading rubber for goods. My Indians to a certain, if only small, extent were becoming accustomed to having some of the things they could get only through me at the trading post, especially arms, ammunition and metal tools. This was an important part of my power over them.

Back at the village when we returned I found the wild drinking and dancing distasteful for the first time, but dared not show it. I had learned from Xumu that it was the place of the chief to show no personal reaction to any situation except in very special circumstances when he wanted to create a counterreaction from the people.

Now I found myself spending more time than usual in the forest to use up my excess energy and to help relieve a feeling of tension. In this way I became more familiar with the details of our hunting territory and I was able to organize the hunting activities of the men more effectively. One day I had descended the bank of a small creek and was climbing up the other side when a large arrow buried itself in the earth at my side. Immediately I dodged behind a tree and blew a high-pitched whistle that I always wore on a string around my neck. This had been given me as a danger signal to call for help after my last ambush attack. I could see nothing to shoot at in the dense forest undergrowth but let go with some rifle shots. In a few minutes some of my hunters were

at my side and we organized a search while one man went back for reinforcements.

When these men arrived, I was escorted with great care back to the village, while the rest of the men began an intensive search for my attacker.

At sundown they came in, chanting, carrying between them a man bound to a pole. They bound him very carefully to the owl tree between the houses and kindled a small fire nearby. The entire village came to taunt him and screech their rage. Nixi had asked that I hold him until the following day. He wanted to work on the prisoner in daylight to obtain the maximum amount of information about our enemies. We set up an all-night guard to watch and protect our prisoner.

In the morning a shout rang out! To everyone's surprise, the prisoner hung dead in his bonds. There was no mark of violence nor wounds. The guards perhaps had dozed off, but they had heard nothing happen. The Indians assured me he had died of his own will during the night. They said it could be done, but seldom in such a very short time.

Now the question was what to do with the body. They all said we should take it out far enough so the smell would not come back, and there let the buzzards eat it. This they considered the worst fate one could have. So I organized a group to carry it away to a point Nixi and I agreed on. When we went back a week later not a sign remained, not even a bone. This was a very bad omen. It meant that someone had carried the remains away. Who was it? Who

was watching us so closely here in the depths of our own territory?

We organized scouting parties to try to determine where these assassination attempts were coming from, but results were inconclusive. Tension mounted and I had to invent special projects to divert attention from the trouble.

We started to produce another load of caucho. Several weeks later I was out with the caucho cutters in the forest, checking on how much rubber we had in blocks. I had gone off quite a distance from them to check on a fruit tree I knew was nearly ready to draw game. When I turned to go back an arrow came flying at me from a distant clump of under-growth. It had been a very long shot and I grabbed the arrow out of the air as it floated by, most of its force spent. At the same time I shot into the vegetation from which the arrow seemed to come and then signaled an alarm with my whistle.

We organized a search, this time with no results at all—not a single sign to go by. The entire village was now grim-faced, frustrated, ready to fight but with nothing to attack.

A group of the old men led by Nixi came to me and asked that I stay in the village, except when carefully escorted. They said if I went off alone in the forest they could not protect me. To be armed with a rifle was not enough; one could not see far enough. All the attacks had been on me. The enemy was now aware of our fire power and was trying to eliminate our source of arms, they said. If I could

tell them where the enemy was, they would destroy him. Nixi suggested that perhaps by taking honi xuma alone I could locate the source of our trouble in a vision.

I tried staying in the village for a few weeks and became desperate. It was well enough for an old chief like ancient Xumu to stay in the village. But I was now barely twenty-one years old and in the peak of good health and vigor. Some way had to be found to use up my energy. As I said before, the tribe lived more in the forest than in the village, and to be confined to the village at my age was like being in jail. It was at this time that I began to notice again the smell of these people, a strange, persistent musky odor that I began to dislike.



Release

IN DESPERATION, finally, I decided to try to locate my enemy by visions and asked Nixi to make for me a jug of honi xuma. I began the preparation of the usual diet and purges. For some reason these preliminaries made me irritable, although I had to repress every sign of it. In spite of my irritation and some physical discomfort I got through the preparations and ordered the small shelter at the edge of the forest made ready.

Late one afternoon about an hour before sundown, Owa Iuxabo, Old Mother, went with me into the forest to watch over me during my vision session. Previously I had sent guards into the forest, out of sight, to guard against intrusion. The trilling notes of a birdcall in reply to my own calls told me these

men were in their places.

I lit the small fire and put on the fragrant leaves, chanting softly to myself. All was in readiness and I poured out a cup full of honi xuma to start the visions. It tasted strangely bitter to me as I gulped it down, and I had the feeling it must be too strong. As I sat quietly in my small hammock awaiting the beginning of the visions, a flight of large blue and red macaws went by just over the treetops. Their raucous, strident calls echoed through the forest, shattering the calm peace of the late afternoon in my secluded glen. The atmosphere seemed heavy, menacing, as the pulsating hum started in my ears.

A leathery, rubberlike feeling came to my skin as I touched it with my fingers, then a trembling in my legs. Instantaneous sensation of alternating hot and cold flashed through my body. I broke out in a dripping, running sweat, and a terrible nausea coupled with deep abdominal convulsions blotted out all other sensation. I remember groping for some control mechanism, but they all escaped me.

I closed my eyes and the color visions began, brilliant greens and blues with billowing, undulating configurations of great plasticity. From these, sinister menacing tentacles began to form and extend toward me. Each became a hideous viper with flashing eyes and tongue. I was incapable of moving and found myself writhing on the ground enveloped in their undulating coils.

All feeling of time and spatial orientation stopped as the colors faded. The snakes gradually uncoiled

and disappeared as wisps of vapor. But involvements of greater depth and import took over.

I became aware of my heartbeat and could follow in great detail the coursing of blood through my body. The source of impulses in the depth of my brain that controlled my body became evident to my understanding. It seemed that I left my body and was observing all this from outside. Then I floated off into a boundless, hideous void without spatial orientation. A feeling of uncontrollable rhythmic acceleration toward some impending disaster plunged me, helplessly, into an indescribably agonizing purgatory of the mind.

Distorted faces began to appear and hold my attention. Visions of my family back in Iquitos appeared and I realized there was sickness—my mother was dying. Unendurable anguish at being away, at the flooding awareness that I would never see her again, blocked out every other perception for a while. Then a jungle scene appeared and I saw my former cauchero companions ambushed in the forest by naked savages with painted faces.

I found myself wandering alone in a forest of tremendous trees. Rough misshapen boulders and other hideous defilements lurked everywhere on the uneven slippery ground. The sound of a strange birdcall held my attention. Suddenly there was the twang of a plucked bowstring. A tremendous feathered arrow came floating through the air. I stood transfixed, unable to move. It struck me down and a hideous grimacing savage stepped from behind a

tree. He was much taller than I, great strength apparent in his body, which was vivid with red body paint. Deliberately he put a naked foot on my chest as my life's blood ebbed out onto the ground and I watched my own death.

I must have lost consciousness for a while. The next thing I recall was seeing the calm, almost sublime, face of Chief Xumu, and with this moving vision I regained control of the visions. The black panther appeared. He and I became one—and prowled the forest, afraid of nothing.

There in the clearing in the gray dawn, the fire was glowing, attended by Old Mother. She was staring at me with a troubled look only half hidden on her face. I felt exhausted, drained. I could not move. She approached my hammock and gave me a large calabash of fruit gruel to drink, and she had to hold my head up so that I could swallow it. As I struggled to a sitting position with her help, she grumbled some disapproving remark but made no direct comment on the night of visions just past.

The final visions I had had of Xumu and the black panther were all that gave me strength of mind to return to the village. And it was noon, even so, before I had the strength and composure that I needed to face the villagers. There were many bird-calls back and forth during the morning, but the guards did not intrude. I had to appear to the people in the village, outwardly at least, the same when I came from the forest as when I had gone into it the previous afternoon. Inwardly my state was chaotic

from the shock of the visions. This I could share with no one. Old Mother had seen only my outward physical reactions. She could have no idea of what had occurred in the visions.

And so, finally, we walked slowly and calmly from the forest, my face the mask I had learned to make it. The visions were not discussed, and I entered the village routine of directing again the daily activities of the tribe.

As the days passed, the residual feeling of profound depression from the visions that I dared not show eased somewhat. But at night the visions returned as terrible nightmares. When I talked or shouted in my disturbed sleep, some one of the women near me would light a torch and waken me to chase away the iuxibo, the evil spirits. To avoid disturbing the others in the large chief's house with my wild dreams, I forced myself to sleep only fitfully and to awaken when the dreams started. Of course this only increased my nervous tension, and now the overpowering musky smell of the closed house at night nauseated me.

In desperation I organized a group to cut caucho again and went with them to the forest. They took elaborate precautions to protect me but did not object as long as I stayed within this group protection. I put forth great physical effort to ease my inner tension.

Soon after we had a load ready, I organized a trip to the trading post. There I learned the depressing news that the rubber prices had continued

to decline and rubber cutters were still leaving the forest. I found a very low stock of merchandise and some of the things I wanted were not available. Rodrigues told me he was expecting a shipment of goods from Manaus in about three months, when the river rose with the coming rainy season. I tried to establish this point of time in my mind.

The money from the rubber was barely enough to buy a few knicknacks. I drew from my balance on deposit to make the purchases large enough to seem worthwhile to my Indians. Firearms had been requested, but I was developing a reason in my mind for not buying any at this time.

Back at our staging camp in the depths of the forest I explained that new arms were on the way but still not available at the trading post. I told them that when the new rifles came we would defend ourselves better from our enemies.

In the forest our rifles, except for the awesome noise, were not much more effective than a bow and arrow. Any branch or tree trunk would deflect or absorb a bullet the same as an arrow, and visibility was always limited, so the idea of improved guns was great news to the Indians.

We went home to Xanada and had the usual big celebration. This relieved the strain and tension for the tribe to some extent, but not for me. The rainy season was coming on, when it would be difficult to produce caucho. Some blocks we had left behind in the forest at the time of our last trip. Urgently now by alternating work groups I managed to get

enough loads together for a trip before the worst rains started.

This time our trip was a nightmare. Sporadic rains had started before we left the village. Two days out on the trail to the northeast we were caught in a deluge. At mid-morning we heard distant thunder off to the east of us. This continued off and on until midday, when a strong breeze hit the forest and made even the large trees sway. It even penetrated to the forest floor and cooled our bodies, which felt pleasant. The Indians, however, were apprehensive and muttered to themselves.

All of a sudden it was deathly quiet with not a sign of air movement, and it began to turn darker on the already shaded jungle floor. The muttering continued, and I noticed an occasional apprehensive glance between Indians. Soon a steady far-off roar started and grew louder in a crescendo as a downpour of rain moved toward us across the forest canopy. Before the rain actually reached us it turned dark; the darkness broken by indistinct blue flashes of lightning that penetrated the vegetation. The forest filtered out the actual lightning flashes so that all we could see was the flickering bright blue light of indistinct origin. The wind began again and explosions of thunder sounded over the roar of the approaching rain.

As if by command, a great deluge of water came cascading down through the treetops. The wind, rain, thunder and flashes of blue light combined to create great confusion. Suddenly the wind increased

and the huge trees began to sway and groan. Nearby we could hear the tremendous, awesome sound of rending, crashing tree trunks.

My companions had moved instinctively to a small rise in the topography that was covered mostly with small trees. Large trees were crashing down all around us and water was rising rapidly in the swale below our small hill. We huddled together in fear. The shattering wind was gone as fast as it came, but the rain diminished only gradually.

We stayed where we were for the night, to let the water drain off. The next morning the daylight revealed forest chaos. Off to our left was a strip of jungle completely blown down, with large twisted and broken trees lying on top of one another. Luckily we had been only on the edge of it. The men were shaken and muttered about evil spirits. We skirted the strip of blown-down forest because it was impossible to penetrate it.

Traveling with a pack through the forest after such a heavy rain was nearly impossible. The ground underfoot was a quagmire. As we delayed on the trail my tension mounted. At night I had nightmares and visions during my fitful, troubled sleep. I kept seeing a small launch navigating up a swift meandering stream, coming into sight and then fading again into the thick green overhanging vegetation, then as I strained to catch another sight of it I would waken, cramped and sore, sitting in my tiny leafed shelter with the rain dripping through.

Finally after a brutal struggle through the sod-

den jungle with our loads, we arrived at night at our usual staging area in the forest above the trading post. I felt worn out, exhausted and apprehensive, but we made a small raft and at daylight I started poling a vine-tied string of caucho blocks downriver to the cluster of houses on the point below the bend of the river. I told my companions I would be back before sundown, as always.

At the trading post Rodrigues greeted me with surprise. "You used to come only once a year, or even less often. Now you show up again in a few weeks!"

He was just finishing checking the cargo from a launch that was in port. I asked him when it would leave.

"When the fuel wood is loaded, probably about midnight tonight," he replied. "Why?"

My answer was to ask him to tally my caucho.

"It's not worth much," he said. "If prices continue as they are, I am going to shut the place down and return to Manaus."

To Manaus—to Manaus! The word echoed in my brain—Manaus, an enchanting faraway place that I had heard about in Iquitos. To Manaus—to Manaus . . .

We weighed in the blocks of rubber, and as we worked a wild idea was forming in my mind, or perhaps it had been there, latent, for some time and was only now surfacing. The money for this load of rubber was only a pittance. I took some from my balance on deposit and bought the things I knew would be most attractive to my Indians in the forest,

but no arms or ammunition.

When these items were packaged up, I asked permission to use a canoe to take the purchases upstream. In reply, Rodrigues asked if I wanted a man to go with me to bring the canoe back.

I had been struggling with a wild thought; the question decided my point.

"No," I said, "I will bring it back myself. Is there space for a passenger on the launch?"

"It is empty—all yours if you wish. Why? Where are you going?" asked Rodrigues.

"I will be back before dark. Prepare my balance on deposit. I will take it with me to Manaus," I replied.

Paddling the canoe upriver with the things for the Indians seemed to take an eternity. I had to struggle to shut off my mind. They noticed that I came alone and they helped me unload the canoe in silence. As we prepared the carrying loads I showed them the items. Then I said to them, "New rifles are being unloaded now at the trading post. They are the guns I told you about; they will shoot through trees. The trees will not be able to stop our bullets. They will kill our enemies who hide behind the trees. They will be unpacked tonight. There are many people waiting now to buy these guns. If I am not there to buy them for us, our enemies the rubber cutters will buy them all."

There was a grumble through the small group.

"I am going back tonight," I continued. "I will buy us the new guns that will shoot through trees

and kill the enemies that hide from us. Tomorrow after midday I will bring them here. You will see. To be safe from discovery until I come you must take all this to our camp in the forest tonight and return tomorrow."

They grumbled, but a small canoe appeared on the river below us. This brought them into action and stopped discussion as they hurriedly evacuated the riverbank.

After reassuring them calmly once more, I departed in the canoe. As I slowly drifted downriver the plaintive call of a tinamou floated on the evening air out of the forest where my men had disappeared. How could I fathom its intent? It was a signal we had used on occasion as a warning.

At the trading post I purchased some clothing, a hammock, received the statement of my account balance from Mr. Rodrigues and boarded the launch. Both on shore and on the launch I was offered food, but refused it because of past upsets.

I had a feeling of total numbness and I searched out a corner of the deck where I could be alone. It seemed the launch would never leave—a thousand last-minute details and instructions. Rodrigues came on board and tried to engage me in conversation by asking me question after question. These I put off somehow, and finally he left me alone.

The launch was wood-burning, and the hiss of escaping steam as boiler pressure increased pointed to impending departure. At last, in a shower of sparks, hissing steam, several hoots on the steam

whistle, with a throbbing of the engine we eased out into a swift current in the flooded river.

My body and mind were numb from weeks of consuming physical effort and suppressed tension. Even so, a tumult of thoughts about the past and the future came flooding into my mind, until from utter exhaustion I slept. My hammock swayed with the motion of the launch. On either side of the river the thick green jungle vegetation hung down over the swift muddy brown water. And if a small tinamou woke in the night and called from the depths of the jungle I did not hear it. I slept, swaying there in the hammock in a secluded corner of the deck while the impulse of both the launch and the current of the Rio Purus carried me downriver, carried me away from the depths of the forest toward that fabled capital of the Amazon, Manaus.



Return

THE RIO PURUS was a meandering stream, doubling back on itself a thousand times before reaching the Amazon River near Manaus. For me the trip was a time of great difficulty. I found the enforced confinement of the launch now even worse than that of the Indian village. The wearing of clothing was an irritating necessity. Remembering how sick I had been after eating once at the trading post, I was afraid of the food, but by eating mostly bananas and plantains at first I was able to ease slowly into the Brazilian diet of highly seasoned dishes.

Communication with the boatmen and the passengers we picked up at other trading posts on the river was almost impossible at first. My own lan-

guage, Peruvian Spanish, unused for these past years, seemed almost foreign and came back but slowly. It had some similarities to the Portuguese of the Brazilians, and in this border area both languages were understood to a certain extent. By the time we reached Manaus, two weeks of downriver travel, I could make myself understood fairly well to some of the men. They were all curious about me, but I told them nothing.

Traveling down the river toward Manaus, I had time to think about the past and wonder about the future. The reality of the events of those seven years in the forest must seem incredible to a person with no exposure to the complexities of the tropical-forest environment. But as I thought back, I realized that from the very moment of my capture I had instinctively sought to understand and gain control over the elements of the strange world into which I was thrust. As understanding and control developed, I had naturally tried to shape events to my advantage. Every trip from the isolated forest dwelling out to the trading post had increased the cumulative tensions and conflicts between my new and my former life. My early family ties and loyalties had been strong, and I believe that subconsciously I never relinquished the thought that I would someday escape. It was inevitable that I should have seized the first real chance that developed in all those years to get away and return to my own people.

Now I had indeed escaped, but as I thought ahead to the long journey still to be made, I wondered

what I should find when I did get to my home in Iquitos. I wondered if I would even recognize my family and if they would know me after all these years when they surely must have thought me dead. How would I fit into that other life?

The day came when we did reach, early in the morning, the city of Manaus. I was totally unprepared for the confusion of the rush and bustle of this busy seaport a thousand miles up the Amazon River. Fortunately, I had made friends of a sort with the mechanic's helper, Jose, during the trip. He agreed to go ashore with me when he was free and take me to the office of Luzero-Rodrigues da Costa & Companhia, where the balance on my rubber deliveries upriver was to be paid.

My first trip through the busy streets of Manaus with Jose was completely confusing to me. This was worse than being lost in the jungle! There were so many strange sights and sounds and happenings, all going on at such a fast pace, that I was, indeed, lost.

At the office, which was in the front of a big warehouse, I met Antonio's uncle, Paulo Rodrigues. He had heard of my arrival from the captain of the *Filó*, the company launch that had brought me downriver. When I gave Sr. Rodrigues the statement of my account he asked me to return the next day and said that I could stay on the launch if I liked. Jose insisted, however, that I go home with him. His mother would put me up. So we went back to the launch for our baggage, mine consisting only of a

hammock and change of clothes that I had bought at the trading post, nothing more.

Sra. Silva, Jose's mother, was very nice to me but she asked too many questions. I answered vaguely, my mind now focused on getting away from Manaus and back to Iquitos and home, hoping there still was such a place.

The next day at the office Don Paulo asked, "What are your plans? Do you expect to buy supplies and return upriver?"

"No," I replied, "I am returning to Iquitos."

"What is your connection there?"

To this I replied that I had been outfitted by my brother-in-law, Lino Vela of Iberia. The balance on record from their post on the upper Purus that I had brought to Manaus with me was the gain on Lino's grubstake. I said the others of my group had gone back overland. It was up to me to return home with our earnings. Don Paulo found Lino listed in his record of rubber shippers in Peru. Lino had bought supplies from Luzero-Rodrigues in Manaus and his credit was good.

Don Paulo then asked what he could do for me, and I answered, "Arrange for my passage upriver to Iquitos as soon as possible and give me the balance of the account in pound sterling notes." These notes were the accepted means of exchange at that time.

Within a couple of days I was on board a large steam launch on its way to Iquitos. There were a few Peruvians on board, and hesitatingly I tried to find out something about my family but without re-

sults. The time passed slowly; many stops were made to unload cargo at trading centers along the upper Amazon—Teffe, Ica, Tabatinga, Caballo Cocha and others. Before my capture by the Huni Kui I had made trips down the Amazon from Iquitos as far as the mouth of the Rio Putumayo on the Brazilian border. Thus as we approached Iquitos I recognized the landmarks, and my anticipation grew as we rounded each bend in the river. Below Iquitos the approach by river is fairly straight, and I could see the town for more than an hour before we arrived.

My thoughts were in a turmoil as the launch docked. My one sack of luggage had long since been ready, and I jumped for the dock and headed for where our house had been. The town had changed, but I barely noticed.

There was the house! Pounding on the door brought a response from within. The door opened and I was swept into the *abraço* of my father's arms.

There is no need here to go into the recounting of my explanations of the story we have just been through. Along with my excitement and joy at being home there came a great wave of sadness as I learned that my mother and a sister had died in an influenza epidemic. This was, as nearly as I could tell, at about the time I had seen in the forest the visions of my mother's death.

Strange as it may seem to you, at least two other important events in my life I have foreseen in ad-

vance. Explain it how you will, my feeling is that it came from Xumu's training. All that I learned from him—the insight I developed of the inner workings of the mind and the human psyche, as well as the knowledge of the natural medicinal plants of the forest and how to use them—all this has remained a part of me in the years that have passed since I left the Huni Kui, years that have brought both joys and sorrows to me. My use of all that Xumu taught me, in a much wider world than he envisioned, has brought me to this point where men and women come in sickness and pain. I am able, sometimes without knowing exactly how, to help them. Also, there is frustration in knowing that I have not been able to impart my knowledge to someone who could continue to use it.

Naturally, many times now, as in all the years that have passed, I wonder about the life of the Huni Kui and what has happened to them since I departed. Pressure on them from the rubber cutters must have disappeared with the collapse of the market for wild rubber caused by plantation rubber production. However, they would still have had their natural enemies in the forest.

I know that the Amahuaca are still active. Recently I had word from a friend who traveled the region of the Rio Tahuamanu that they still attack unwary intruders in their territory. A peripheral group living in intermittent contact with the outside world on the Rio Inuya have told visitors of an isolated interior village of their people far to the south-

west of them. The chief of this village, they say, is called Iriya, and it is reported that he occasionally trades with outsiders. It may be that it is Iriya who leads the group of Huni Kui who were for a time my people, there in that strange, isolated, primitive world.



Appendix

THE RELATIONSHIP OF VARIOUS VISION-CAUSING EXTRACTS

Niri honi xuma in the Amahuaca idiom means "vine from which the vision extract is made." *Ayahuasca* in Quechua means "skull of an old man" or "spirit of the dead."

Botanical investigation of the Amazon flora by various authorities has shown that *Ayahuasca* extracts come from a jungle vine of the genus *Banisteriopsis*. Several species of this genus have been identified. Which species the Huni Kui used is uncertain, but there is little doubt that the vine was *Banisteriopsis*.

The leaves added to the mashed stem of the vine during the boiling down and extraction process were probably *yaje*, identified as *Prestonia amazonica*, a forest shrub, and by some authorities are thought to add a hypnotic effect to the extract and to cause the bluish aureole of the visions.

APPENDIX

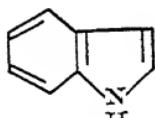
The infusion from the vine *Banisteriopsis Caapi* contains harmine, *harmaline* and *d-tetrahydroharmine*, the latter two thought to have substantial psychotomimetic activity.

Yaje (*Prestonia amazonica*) is reported to contain an alkaloid called telepathine and the alkaloids *yajeine* and *yajeinine*.

The question naturally comes to mind, What is the relationship between *honi xuma* or *ayahuasca* and other well-known hallucinogenic chemicals?

LSD-25 (LSD) (d-lysergic acid diethylamide), the hallucinogen that has been in the forefront of the psychedelic discussions of recent years, was first synthesized from ergot in 1943 by Dr. Albert Hofmann, a Swiss chemist. This compound in turn comes from a fungus *Claviceps* that grows on rye and wheat grain. Ergot has a long history in medieval Europe of causing nervous and circulatory disorders when the products of affected grain were eaten.

Most hallucinogens, including LSD-25, have what is called, in chemistry, an indole structure, (C₈H₇N) or



or have the same CH₂ · CH₂ · N^{CH₃} ^{CH₃} "tail."

Included are harmine from *Banisteriopsis (honi xuma)*, bufotenine from the mushroom (or fungus) *Amanita muscarina*, DMT from *Piptadenia* snuff, psilocin and psilocybin from the Aztec magic mushroom (fungus) *Psilocybe mexicana*, ibogaine from the

APPENDIX

Congolese jungle plant *Iboga tabernanthea* shown to me by forest guides near Libenge, Congo Kinshasa.

However, there are various hallucinogens, some synthetics, that do not have the indole structure, including mescaline from the peyote cactus *Lophophora Williamsii*. Therefore, the formerly held theory that hallucinogens had to have the indole structure is untenable. And a great deal of scientific investigation still remains to be done to explain satisfactorily the chemistry and mechanisms of the psychedelic substances and indicate their legitimate uses.

F. B. L.

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Manuel Córdova-Ríos was born in 1887 in Iquitos, Peru, where he now lives. Married and the father of 10, he has 50 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren. In addition to the journeys described in *Wizard of the Upper Amazon*, he has traveled in Colombia and Brazil as well as Peru. Sr. Córdova-Ríos has been employed by J. Borda and Company, organizing rubber-cutting on the Rio Tapiche, has developed a farm on the Rio Ucayali, and has worked for Compania Astoria Peruana gathering pharmaceutical products from the forests. Ever since the events of this book, he has functioned as a "curandero" or healer, to which practice he has devoted full time since 1968.

F. Bruce Lamb was born in Colorado in 1913 and holds B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Michigan. He has traveled widely, in North, South and Central America, as well as Africa and Asia, and has held many posts and consultancies in the field of forest engineering, specializing in tropical forestry. He has published two books and numerous articles in this field, in both Spanish and English; and his *Mahogany of Tropical America* has been called a major contribution. Dr. Lamb has presented papers and participated in many international conferences on tropical forestry including the Tropical Section of the Sixth World Forestry Congress, Madrid, 1966. Married and the father of one daughter, he lives in New York City and since 1960 has been Technical Director, Forest Resources, for U.S. Plywood-Champion Papers, Inc. His interest in primitive tribesmen began with the Apiaca Indians in Mato Grosso, Brazil, during World War II.

Primitive though the Huni Kui proved highly sophisticated in the knowledge of the curative properties of plants of the tropical forest. The lore that Manuel Córdova-Ríos gathered during his seven years with the Huni Kui he brought with him to the outside world, where in the years since his captivity he has become famous as a healer, credited with thousands of cures. Among those he has treated successfully are a Belgian ambassador to Peru and a former Peruvian President.

F. Bruce Lamb, an American expert in tropical forestry and the author of many articles and books in this field, has rendered into English, starkly and beautifully, the amazing experiences told to him in Spanish by his friend Córdova-Ríos. It is an enthralling tale of high drama that reads like an adventure-fantasy scenario. And it is all the more astonishing for being true.

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